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The Goal of the Waste Land Quest

By William T. Moynihan

THE MAJOR problem of T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, from its composition until the present time, has been to ascertain the subsuming form of what appears to be a disjointed collection of reflections and episodes. The recent emphasis by George Williamson and Grover C. Smith on the character of the "protagonist" and on further evidence of grail-quest allusions have done much to resolve the problem. However, I would like to carry the examination of the protagonist and of the quest he undertakes a little further. In this manner I believe a more immediate and comprehensive reading of the poem can be achieved.

With Eliot's *Waste Land*, as with the so-called "mythical method" in general, there is a tendency to "take from the top to widen the base." Thus, while the range of allusion becomes cosmic, the specific point is blunted; likeness becomes identity and pertinency is watered down to platitude. Often there is little the critic can do about this. His attempts to sharpen the meaning of numerous references by pointing out their sources only increases the process of generalization, only succeeds in equating Christ, Osiris, and Adonis simply as "dying gods." To go further and point out specific differences and details may, paradoxically, obscure the meaning of the whole. But, if all the allusions do blur into one simple archetype, the poem is a rather poor one.

Such, however, is not the case in *The Waste Land*, the prototype of modern archetypal poetry. *The Waste Land* escapes the danger of intellectual myopia, as do all great poems drawing upon archetypes, by possessing a clearly evident organizing principle which permits the allusive material in the poem to be presented on various levels. The organizing concept of this poem is man in search of eternal life. This search is related on three levels: epical, psychological, and spiritual. Obviously, these three levels are not mutually exclusive. But, although they merge, they are nevertheless distinct.

That there is a general epical movement in *The Waste Land* may be seen from its correspondences with traditional epics. The "hero" of *The Waste Land* (whose meditations we overhear, whose stories we hear, and from whose life we are given dramatic episodes), like the hero of the *Odyssey*, for example, is a man of many guises, and a man who journeys toward a goal. Like Odysseus, the protagonist here is a "Noman," an Everyman, an Adam. Homer's hero struggles (literally, at least) toward home; Eliot's toward a spiritual goal. In the latter is a motif of obstacle, seduction, and purposive wandering. The androgy-

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nous Tiresias "melts into" the disenchanted husband, an absent soldier, the consort of Mr. Eugenides, a Fisher King, a Christ-figure, one who walks with the risen Savior, one who hears God speak, and who, at poem's end, sits fishing, still seeking for a solution to the essentially insolvable. The masculine Odysseus wanders on his quest as husband, soldier, the paramour of women, and a Fisher King (he too has received the mysterious wound on the thigh which Miss Weston discusses, and his land, and he himself were wasted during his wandering). At the end of the *Odyssey* the hero has not completed his quest; he must shoulder his oar and wander until he has made peace with Poseidon. In *The Waste Land* the protagonist sits with his fishing pole knowing that even if he sets his land in order, like Odysseus, his quest too must continue.

The psychological or mythical level (well treated by Elizabeth Drew) has been the prime concern of *Waste Land* critics. The fertility myths and the overtones of the "archetype of transformation" serve an important function. But the world of *The Waste Land* is bordered by apocalyptic and demonic symbols, and nothing less than a meaningful quest which takes such things specifically into account will provide the subsuming form. The rats, bats, and other images of Hades; the city, wheel, and water of the natural world; the fire, light, and thunder of the supernatural world are of course archetypals and susceptible to various interpretations. But the progress of the protagonist is undeniably vertical—from Madame Sosostris, who speaks with a bad cold, to the Lord of Creation who speaks through the thunder.

In the search for an organizing concept due weight should be given to what the author himself says about his work. And, in this regard, we must note Eliot's regret "at having sent so many enquirers off on a wild goose chase after Tarot cards and the Holy Grail." For, despite the importance of both these themes, it should be emphasized that the cards are used as a variation of the traditional prophetic device, and, more important, that the grail quest is but one of three distinct quest patterns in the poem. Inasmuch as the poem shows the goal of the quest to be essentially a spiritual one, the final interpretation of the images must be more than psychological or epical. It must be spiritual.

I would now like to give a brief reading of the poem, taking into consideration chiefly the epic and mystical levels and pointing out how the mystical is the subsuming level.

THE TITLE of Part I, "The Burial of the Dead," immediately suggests quest and rebirth, the mystic aspects of *The Waste Land*. The concept of burial as the beginning of a journey is evidently as old as mankind. W. F. Jackson Knight says the ritual pattern of initiation itself appears to have begun as a burial rite (*Cumaeen Gates*). St. Paul, a source for the title, developed the idea of passage in Christian terms. A quest which begins with burial is a quest for divine life.

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Eliot used April to image natural rebirth calling it cruel because mankind does not seem to partake in this rebirth.

Eliot deals further with this concept in *The Family Reunion*. Harry, in the speech beginning, "I have spent many years in useless travel," asks: "Is the cold spring / Is the spring not an evil time, that excites us with lying voices?" What excites us is the rebirth, and what is evil is the uncertainty of our own rebirth. Mary tells Harry that in the painful stirring of nature under the snow there is a kind of joy:

But joy is a kind of pain
I believe the moment of birth
Is when we have knowledge of death.

Tiresias, like Harry, recalls a lifetime of "useless travel" and feels spring is an evil time. There is no Mary in *The Waste Land* to answer succinctly the dilemma of life and death; there is only the enigma of life-in-death and death-in-life. Juxtaposed to nature's endless cycle ("breeding," "mixing," "stirring," "covering," "feeding") are the images of personal, purposeless, sterile actions.

Lines eight through eighteen of Part I convey a sense of movement and frustration by the active verbs, by images of passage, and by discontinuity. The verbs are obvious. Three different images of passage are present: the colonnade, the sled going down the mountain, and going south in the winter. Finally, the whole suggests the passage of time, since the incidents are not only a montage, but also only memories of things past. The speaker skips from incident to incident in the past and closes with the *non sequitur*, "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter." The discontinuity of thought conveys restlessness, disillusionment, the desire for escape. Although Marie was afraid on the sled, she remembers that "one feels free" in the mountains. But she has made no effort to return there. She only reads "much of the night" (suggesting sleeplessness) and flees from winter, the time of fear and suffering, but also of freedom.

The second section of Part I (lines nineteen through forty-two) defines the nature of the quest. The protagonist is pictured as fallen. He may have been an Adam driven out of the Garden of Eden, or simply a man who has had some hope, some spiritual insight, which is now gone. A tree is traditionally the symbol of life. Now, whether we take "the dead tree" to be meaningless Christianity, the tree of knowledge, or the tree of life, it is equally dead, and life is a hell for the protagonist. The dried tubers of the first section are analogous to the roots that clutch in this section, and will be re-echoed in the leaves that clutch the bank of the river in Part III. The epithet, "Son of man," always used in Christian tradition in reference to the Messiah, or a prototype of the Messiah, provides the Adam-Christ overtones.

While agreeing substantially with Unger's treatment of Eliot's rose gardens, there is another important allusion that should be emphasized concerning the

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Hyacinth garden. For, to judge from Miss Evelyn Underhill's accounts (*Mysticism*), the terms Eliot uses to describe this garden experience,

I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence,

are those one would use to describe a mystical vision. In other words, perhaps the speaker did not so much undergo "an experience of love" (Brooks) as an experience of God, a vision, so to speak, of the goal to be achieved. (This is the kind of reading Eliot made of Dante's *Vita Nuova*. "The final cause is the attraction towards God . . . the loves of man and woman [or for that matter of man and man] is only explained and made reasonable by the higher love. . .")

The alchemists of the 16th century were trying to express much the same concepts and experiences which Eliot tries to express in his poem, and there are curiously parallel uses of imagery which cast some light on ambiguous points of *The Waste Land*. In this regard, the *lapis philosophorum*, a symbol of Christ and often red in color, is a concept which sheds some light on the puzzling red rock of lines twenty-five and twenty-six. In a waste land where there is no relief the poet asks us to come with him under the shadow of the red rock. Here where one might imagine there would be some relief, there is none. Here, in the shadow of "Christ the tiger," there is a new fear.

A rock is traditionally the symbol of the starting place of new life. It is not life itself (on the contrary, the stone is a symbol of the death impulse), but the *prima materia* out of which life will come. Northrop Frye, in his *Fearful Symmetry*, summarizes the case for rock symbolism: "life seems, in some way we cannot fathom, to form itself out of dead matter. As the rock is the image of dead matter, all new life struggles out of a rock, and relapses back into it at death." Christ rises from his hewn tomb and rolls away the stone. The king (new life) is marked by pulling the sword from the stone (the Yasilikaya Chamber, Arthur, Theseus). Prometheus and Samson (confined life) are in the shadows of rocks. The hero of the waste land will show us "fear in a handful of dust." Personal creation, the formation of man from "the dust of the earth," and the redemptive intercession of the divine *lapis* cast a burden of initiative upon those sojourning in the waste land.

The Hyacinth girl and the light are analogous to the "whiteness, the state of Luna, or Silver, the 'chaste and Immaculate Queen,' [which] is the equivalent of the Illuminative Way. . ." The final secret of alchemic mysticism is the union of the white and the red "from which comes forth the Magnum Opus: deified or spiritual man" (*Mysticism*). The final goal of the *Waste Land* quester is the attainment of the union he envisioned in the garden.

Section three now outlines the steps the remainder of the journey will follow.

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In the *Odyssey* the Circe, whom Levy and Jackson Knight link with the Sibyl of Cumae, sends Odysseus to Hades to consult Tiresias about the journey to Ithaca. The structure of lines forty-three to fifty-nine and sixty to seventy-six is analogous to this part of the *Odyssey*. The female monsters of Scylla and Charybdis have an echo in the Lady of the Rocks; the one-eyed merchant is reminiscent of Polyphemus; "Fear death by water" is an appropriate admonition recalling Tiresias' prophecy that death shall come to Odysseus from the sea (Book XI); and "crowds of people, walking around in a ring," though immediately recalling the *Inferno*, also has overtones of Homer's Hades: "All this crowd gathered about the pit from every side. . ." (Book XI).

The card of the drowned Phoenician Sailor belongs to the protagonist because he too must make a water journey. It symbolizes the "sea-change," that alchemical process analogous to the mystical way, whereby we achieve the transformation of a baser nature into gold. There is the possibility that the pearls, in this context, may suggest the "pearl of great price," in addition to the obvious Shakespeare echo.

There is no distinction in *The Waste Land* between hell and contemporary life. The Hades through which Tiresias passes is a state of mind embracing various times and various lives in a present moment. It is the place of those "who lived without blame, and without praise," typified by the man "who from cowardice made the great refusal" (*Divine Comedy*, Canto III). The *Inferno* reference follows the expression "Unreal City." The only way in which London or any other city is really *unreal* is in a system of thought where the "City of God" is contrasted with the "City of Man." As Blake says, "The cities man builds in this world express his desires to live an eternal civilized life in a New Jerusalem of which the Messiah is the cornerstone. . ."

The important point that has been overlooked by critics in this final section of Part I is the nature of Eliot's condemnation. The best commentary on this section is in the source of "hypocrite lecteur"—Baudelaire's introductory poem in *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Eliot's prime concern, like Baudelaire's, is with the ugly monster *Ennui*. Both see the contemporary scene in terms of a descent into hell caused, basically, by being neither hot nor cold. But they also see more. We have frequently been reminded of Eliot's debt to Webster and his acquaintance with fertility rites in connection with the lines: "Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men, / Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!" But these lines also echo Petronius' *Satyricon*. Giving directions for the decoration of his monument at his grave, Trimalchio asks that "At the feet of my effigy you have my little bitch put . . ."—"bitch" here referring to his wife. Then, shortly after an argument with his wife, he cries, "All right! I'll make you long yet to dig me up again with your fingernails." The hell of Eliot's contemporary world thus lies between the poles of Baudelaire's *Ennui* and Petronius' decadence. We plant our

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corpses as Stetson of Mylae planted his Osiris effigy—aware of gentle April, aware simply of the turning of the wheel, aware of vegetation. “To plant a corpse” is Hollywood slang, the word “sprout” is humorous in a macabre sense, and as Eliot reads lines seventy-four and seventy-five, his slow deliberate cadence picks up to the tempo of a punch line. The satire seems almost inescapable.

“A GAME of Chess” describes two aspects of the quest: the temptress preventing the fulfillment of the voyage, and the beleaguered wife who suffers while the quester remains far distant. Lil is the severely tired woman, who, unlike Penelope, falters and fails. Both of these themes are closely related to the central mystical experience of the Hyacinth garden and reflect the struggle to achieve that ideal, the illuminative way, the union of the red and white—the fertile union (marriage) of male and female. The task of the Fisher King is to restore health to the waste land; of *Odysseus*, to be reunited with his wife and restore order to his land; of the protagonist of *The Waste Land*, to achieve spirituality in the midst of seduction, the disintegration of marriage, madness, despair, and materialism.

The protagonist is, like the Phoenician sailor, drowned in the presence of the “Lady of the Rocks.” Instead of achieving his goal, he is trapped. This sense of being spiritually moribund is related to the cyclic theme of the opening lines. (There are echoes of the wheel, the Karma, the seasonal cycle—the perfumes stir the air, “stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling,” the sea-wood is fed, and “if it rains, a closed car.”) The dormant, inactive, unfertile state is linked with infidelity—the Philomel reference—which is completely developed in Part III.

In the midst of this spiritual dead-end (expressed in demonic imagery: “I think we are in rats alley / Where dead men lost their bones”), the haunting image of rebirth persists: “I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes.”

The second section of Part II presents another aspect of the dilemma (a Scylla and Charybdis dilemma). It makes little difference whom you identify as the hero in these episodes. The problem, the situation (marriage) is the same.

Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children?
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—

Lil's friend's conversation has made her convictions about marriage abundantly clear. In contrast to the sterility of the first situation, we see here fertility represented and ridiculed. Mad Ophelia's lines closing the section catch the essence of the tension, the emotional crack-up, the hostile and ironic world.

“The Fire Sermon” presents further obstacles and entrapments on several levels. Infidelities and sterility surround and practically overwhelm the wan-

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derer. The wheel continues to turn, the seasons pass, but winter predominates. The demonic rat creeps past the protagonist (who is both a son and a brother—a true universal—the son of Adam and the brother of Christ)

While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse.

The dull canal and the gashouse give little hope of fish and less hope for catching what Miss Weston tells us the Fisher King is angling for. "There is thus little reason to doubt that, if we regard the Fish as a Divine Life symbol, of immemorial antiquity, we shall not go very far astray."

The hero strives for divine life in a world burning with infidelity and unproductive unions. The union of the soul with God is as a fruitful and blissful union, whereas, in Parts II and III we are presented with a series of unfruitful, sterile unions. There is no desert imagery in this central portion except the one reference to the Philomel in the desert. We journey near the water, the Thames.

"Unreal City" repeats the motif of the last section of Part I, and Mr. Eugenides, a salesman of the mystery cult, is to be linked with Stetson, and, in terms of the epic, with the cannibalistic Polyphemous. And certainly if, as Brooks says, his invitation is homosexual, the imagery is fantastically comprehensive. Cannibalism is the demonic parody of the Eucharist, and homosexuality a parody of the fruitful marriage. Thus the presence of the merchant on the spiritual level parallels the presence of a Cyclops on the physical level.

The crowd that went over the London Bridge in the morning comes back at the "violet hour." At this point Tiresias appears, and the nature of the "hero" becomes a bit clearer. Tiresias, the blind man who has vision, emphasizes the predicament of the inhabitants of the waste land. He symbolizes the blind yet knowing human soul. From this central figure radiate all the other figures of the poem, and in his androgynous personality the different characters meet, forging a cyclic, ironic central figure. His foresuffering and foreknowledge suggest the Christian doctrine of Christ having foresuffered and foreknown all the sins of subsequent generations. And it cannot be an accident that he too awaits "the expected guest," or that the clerk leaves figuratively blind: "And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . ." Like Christ, who daily sat in the temple, Tiresias sat below the Theban wall. It may be coincidental that "the builders of Thebes [came] from Phoenicia" (G. R. Levy, *The Sword from the Rock*), but Tiresias catches characteristics of the one-eyed merchant—the Phoenician sailor—as surely as his prophetic nature connects him with Madame Sosostris and his blindness with the wounded Fisher King and other spiritually blind inhabitants of *The Waste Land*.

It is misleading to regard, as is generally done, the fishermen who lounge at noon as symbols of fertility. They, like the other inhabitants of the city of man,

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are spiritually dead. The fact that they "lounge at noon" indicates this. Here, as we have seen previously, the cry of "City, city" is a desolate one ("O Jerusalem"). The pleasant whining of the music is an obvious overture to the songs of the temptresses that follow, and certainly no place for a mystic voyager to halt.

The "collocation" of Buddha's Fire Sermon and St. Augustine's coming to Carthage, is, as Eliot tells us in his notes, "not an accident." In terms of the hero-epic, the protagonist has arrived at a point from which he may act. That point in *The Waste Land* is asceticism, the death of self. It is only at the conclusion of Part III that we learn the meaning of the Fire Sermon. By being plucked out—by the burning—the protagonist can be joined to the Divine. Fire is a literary archetype for the heavenly or divine.

If the protagonist must be purged by flame, what is the purpose of the water symbolism in Part IV? To emphasize the rebirth aspects of water in this section seems wrong. The only way this section can fit into the structure of the whole is by regarding Phlebas as a reminder of the inevitability of death. Death has taken him while he was still concerned only with "the profit and loss." The protagonist is warned that he cannot put off his decision. He must proceed to his goal or run the risk of dying before fulfilling the quest. He is at the Grail Castle.

In Part V there is a change in imagery. Before the hero can leave the waste land he must contest with demons in the desert—which is the customary place of spiritual growth. Evelyn Underhill, quoting from the biography of Antoinette Bourigan, writes: "When shall I be perfectly thine, O my God? and she thought He still answered her, *When thou shalt no longer possess anything, and shalt die to thyself.* And when shall I do that, Lord? He answered, *In the Desert.*"

"What the Thunder Said" summarizes and restates the thematic material of the poem in religious terms. The opening section of Part V explains somewhat the opening of the poem, that is, after the agony in the garden, "April is the cruellest month." (Eliot makes *garden* plural emphasizing the universality of the experience; the garden of Gethsemane and the Hyacinth garden are joined.) The scene of Part V repeats the earlier scene. The cicada recalls the grasshopper, the dry rock, the "stony rubbish." For the first time we are shown a relationship which is not wholly tainted or disintegrating: "When I count there are only you and I together." The protagonist and the girl who carries the flower of the slain god of Part I are reflected in the disciples walking toward Emmaus with the risen Christ. The sandy road of the previous lines has become the white road.

The imagery portends death not birth. It is the city of man which crumbles, however. The world of the protagonist crumbles; the Belladonna of Part III appears, as do the bats, the "reminiscent bells," and the singing voices. But the quester is in the mountains where men traditionally approach God. Here, as

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Jung quotes from Abul Kasim, the essence of life is found—"in the mountain where . . . everything is upside down." In the Chapel Perilous—not in the "splendour of Ionian white and gold"—the protagonist realizes what he has betrayed. In the echo of the cock crow comes the damp gust and the lightning (recalling the wet hair and the heart of light of the Hyacinth garden). And then the protagonist hears the voice of God. We are back at the beginning, both of the period of trial for the protagonist and for the whole world, back to the Vedic cradle of our civilization.

There seems to be some analogy between the commands of Prajapati and various religious triads. Perhaps the commands are closest to the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The similarity is seen by the responses. Under *Datta* he remembers his promiscuities, "The awful daring of a moment's surrender / Which an age of prudence can never retract." After *Dayadhvam* he confesses pride. And after *Damyata* appears the forceful image of the boat and the helmsman, an image of divine direction of the soul, or of obedience.

I believe there is more of a positive note in the final eleven lines than most commentators have admitted. What negativism there is, is of two kinds: 1) That of an ironic world in which the hero is fallen man; 2) That of a pattern which reflects the inevitable rise and fall, attainment and loss, of natural cycles. Certainly if, regardless of the irony, the Fisher King can set his lands in order, he is no longer impotent. And it seems relevant that he asks himself "Shall I." There is no question of "can I"; it is only a matter of will. The destruction of London Bridge repeats the symbol of the destruction of the unreal city, of the material city. If, for him, the city of man is destroyed, he has no alternative but to turn to the other city. Thus, it follows that he, like Arnaut Daniel, will gladly accept the necessary purification to achieve this divine life for which he is still fishing. The reference to the swallow is another image of transformation but for the present he is "The Prince of Aquitaine, of the ruined tower." The fragments that he has to prop up his ruins are the memories of infidelities, death, rebirth, and the Voice of Thunder. Many, like Hieronymo, who eagerly accepted the invitation to supply the court with a play ("Why then Ile fit you") so that he might achieve his goal, are mad. The final words of the poem are negative to the extent that the first stage of the purgative way itself is negative—negative, certainly, in respect to other stages of the mystic quest. But even the realization that "Give, Sympathize, Control" result in "the peace which passeth understanding," is a far more positive attitude than "April is the cruellest month." The quester of *The Waste Land* seems to have reached a stage of acceptance and of resignation not too much different than that of Simeon:

Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,
Not for me the ultimate vision.
Grant me thy peace.

Ernst Jünger in France

By Gaspard L. Pinette

I am no longer what I was. I must wonder unceasingly what it means to be a German, and why the German is so unhappy and makes others so unhappy too.

—Friedrich Sieburg

"YOUR BEST friend should be your best enemy as well," said Nietzsche, a statement, if read in reverse would suit Ernst Jünger particularly well since his greatest enemy finally became his best friend. France, a country he had fought in war and opposed in peace through the greater part of his life, at long last proved such a determining influence on this German nationalist writer that he returned home from Paris a profoundly changed man.

Three times did Jünger stay in France and each time in a soldier's uniform. His first military garb was not his own country's but that of the Foreign Legion. Young Ernst deserted his school for no other reason than boredom with the good life at home. The report of his early escapade, *Afrikanische Spiele*, was not published until 1936. Nevertheless, Jünger succeeded in keeping vivid his first observations of France. The Foreign Legion appeared in this tale as a strangely disorganized band of desperados whose favored pastime seemed to have been desertion. Although hurrying on to his African adventures, Jünger included a few glimpses of France and reported an encounter with a policeman in Verdun who warned him against his avowed design to join the Legion, a warning that was repeated by the regimental doctor who screened the applicants for fitness. These incidents surprised Jünger since they stemmed from an entirely different interpretation of duty. The adventure-seeking German student, of course, scorned such well intentioned advice since he did not look for safety but for the excitement of danger.

The African spree came to an early and happy end because of paternal intervention, but Ernst Jünger was to return very soon to France as a volunteer in a German infantry regiment. He gave an excellent account in his warbook, *In Stahlgewittern*, of the arrival of his company at the front. These pages, showing the bewilderment of the young recruits when war threw off its debonaire mask, suddenly sinking its claws into the bodies and souls of teenage boys, belong to the best of German writing. The young generation of volunteer soldiers awoke to the terrifying discovery that modern warfare had nothing in common with the heroic tales of the past. The ensuing disenchantment became the foremost topic of most books about the first great war. Jünger, however, did not allow himself to remain depressed for long. In complete contrast to Remarque, Renn,

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Barbusse or Giono, he found a powerful stimulus in danger. He could enjoy the taste of deliberate risk which he had not found in the Foreign Legion. Fighting was to him an exciting game rather than a tragedy, and although he recorded human sufferings he did not share them.

His interest in the fate of war-torn France remained quite casual; he threw a keen but cold look on the country whose sons he fought and in whose houses he camped. The Frenchman was the enemy to him in contrast to the British soldier in whom he saw a mere opponent. Jünger always remembered the fierce figure of a French soldier throwing a hand grenade at him as one of the most formidable impressions of his life.

The aftermath of the war found the highly decorated and often wounded lieutenant in anarchic post-war Germany where he joined several semi-secret veteran organizations that vowed death and destruction to the Weimar republic. Jünger's war books and many contributions to the right wing press made him the outstanding champion of nationalistic circles. Conservative Germany recruited, with Jünger's literary skill, a considerable counterweight to the many glorious pens of the Left.

After only a dozen years of flirtation with *pronunciamentos* the nationalist intellectuals had to undergo the experience of the sorcerer's apprentice. They could not rid the country of the spirits they had conjured, and Jünger, at the extreme right, was not spared what later Koestler discovered at the Left: totalitarian regimes have a grim face and bear no resemblance to the utopias about which the sophisticated writers dream at their desks.

Jünger's answer to oppression was retreat, *Innere Emigration*, into the ivory tower. His aristocratic disgust with mass organizations and their vulgar leaders was the main reason prompting him to write *Auf den Marmorklippen*, a book regarded as the *roman à clef* of Germany's dictatorship. This novel was a writer's protest against ruthless party rule, telling in the form of a romantic tale the approaching end of free man. The lawlessness of Germany's leaders was severely condemned and the existence of torture chambers hinted. In these *Schinderhütten* were committed crimes against the dignity of man that intimidated even the bravest. Jünger's novel ended pessimistically, showing the inability of the old traditional society to struggle against the modern masses.

Jünger, the most celebrated writer of the Front generation placed himself in an awkward position with this book. The government tolerated his works only because they were believed to arouse the military spirit of the young. But a dictatorship cannot allow any opposition to exist. Jünger's position became so endangered that he had to look for protection within the ranks of the army, a subterfuge many took who had the party to fear.

When war broke out in 1939 Jünger was sent to command a company on the Rhine and Moselle front. Again he earned a decoration but this time for a

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Good Samaritan's deed, having carried a wounded man from the line of fire. He saw in these circumstances the hint of fate which no longer called him to spectacular actions but to a much more difficult show of courage: to remain true to the age-old ethics of Germany against the cult of brutality of the new leaders of his country. Again he was sent marching over French roads and finally called to Paris where he spent the remainder of the war as a staff officer. This third sojourn brought from his pen two books; the first volume to appear, *Gärten und Strassen*, told of easy victory in 1940. Captain Jünger and his men saw little action and experienced for the last time a *frisch fröhlicher Krieg*. There was enough leisure to fill diaries with notes and to complete his insect collection in "subtle hunting." The *poilu* and his grenade had symbolized the Frenchman of the first war; in 1940 the refugee and the prisoner, both victims and not fighters, represented their country and burdened the captain who had to help create order out of chaos, to organize and to advise; Jünger did this to the best of his ability since the years after 1918 had made him familiar with the sufferings of defeat. "In days when one's homeland lies beaten to the ground, we experience the deepest agony," he wrote. But Jünger, no newcomer to the anguish of the vanquished, had to undergo a much more excruciating misery than that of being conquered; the shame of the homeland in triumph, when unworthy but lucky leaders succeed.

JÜNGER'S first war diary did not yet show these sombre aspects of the war. Its mood is carefree, and it tells of France's beautiful gardens, of casual encounters with a variety of men and women and of thoughtful moments in silent churches, as in Laon, where he noted the formidable strength of the cathedral. Jünger called it "fürchterliche Kraft," this word being one of his favorite expressions for any powerful creation or thought. But he did not satisfy himself with a mere recording of his observations, since he was always searching for the hidden meaning of human actions and natural phenomena, trying to find a universal law beneath the multitude of apparently disparate incidents.

He had entered his literary career as a warrior; fighting was to him the highest fulfillment of man, and life seemed to bloom nowhere as intense as in the shadow of death. These leanings made him scorn democracy and brought him close to nihilism, yet Ernst Jünger became a moralist. His transformation into an entirely different man is the main topic of his second war book, *Strahlungen*.

This profound change, a great spiritual adventure, began in Germany with the *Cliffs of Marble*, but the transfer to Paris carried it to full maturity. In Paris there gathered a small group of career officers who represented the traditional mentality of their cast. Jünger sympathized with them, but he did not believe that their struggle against the mass organizations of the time had much chance

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of success. He wrote: "The warriors would like to preserve war, but in an archaic form."

But even in such select circles spies were to be feared, and since the number of his trusted friends was very small, Jünger often found no partners at all for the long talks he loved and was forced to confide his thoughts to his diary as the "only possible form of conversation." A German of Jünger's type was bound to be profoundly and sadly alone in such times, and books, especially the Bible, proved to be his best companions, though he did not undergo any spiritual revival or conversion. Jünger, like Maurras, thought in terms of churches rather than of faith; religion represented to him the last bond against the all destroying effects of nihilism. "My way to theology leads through reason; I must prove God to myself before I can believe in him," he wrote. Such a position remained ambiguous, and Jünger added with regret: "More beautiful would be a state of grace, but it does not correspond to my situation."

Anxiously searching for spiritual values capable of withstanding the destructive trends of society, Jünger became a fervent reader of other writers who had struggled with similar problems. Bloy, Huysmans and Bernanos engaged him, but Huysmans proved to be disappointing because of his "belated romanticism" as a writer "whose protest against society was prompted by an aesthete's disgust rather than by moral rebellion." Of all French authors no one captivated Jünger as much as Léon Bloy, whose works contained a revelation no other was able to give him.

Although Bloy's vehemence filled Jünger at times with repulsion, he declared that the truth must be taken where it is found. This specific truth lay in Bloy's violent refusal of all materialistic forms of thought and his acceptance of death as a step of lesser importance than generally believed. Other traits attracting Jünger to Bloy were his conservatism and his indifference toward merely technical progress. Bloy hated the automobile as an instrument of annihilation and believed the construction of the Paris Métro a sinister foreboding of the oncoming end of man's soul.

It may come as a surprise that Jünger, who confessed lacking true faith, should become such an enthusiastic admirer of Bloy's work that he wanted to familiarize Germany's youth with it. He was quick to excuse the many obvious weaknesses of his favorite author, whose unrestrained outbursts of hatred and undeniable delight in destruction were nihilistic traits, as Jünger had to concede. But the fascination of the strange spectacle "this Christian offered in rising to great heights from muddy grounds" was so strong that Jünger called Bloy's work "definitely fortifying" because Bloy longed for the "philosopher's stone from his froth and dark heaven."

Jünger here recalls Maritain who saw in Bloy "a Christian of the second century strayed into the third republic." But Bloy's passionate religiosity alone

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would not explain the spell his tormented soul cast on Jünger, who avoided scrupulously ever mentioning the word "faith" and substituted the more colorless "theology" for it. Jünger remained unaffected in matters of belief, even in such important pieces of work as his pamphlet, *Der Friede*, which he composed in secret in Paris as the spiritual manifesto of the German opposition. The key to Jünger's admiration for Bloy cannot be found merely in a specifically keen religious interest since Jünger paid little or no attention to other Christian authors such as Huysmans, Bernanos, Claudel or Mauriac. It seems more likely that Bloy attracted him with his unrelenting hatred for the bourgeoisie.

BLOY'S boasting of being the leader of a wrecking squad has a striking parallel in Jünger's earlier writings where he defined the role of literature as similar to the machine in modern battle: literary work has no longer to serve the determination of good and evil, right or wrong, and reaction and progress but, to the contrary, it should place itself in the service of living forces, "Destruction being the only appropriate attitude towards existing conditions."

Bloy was hostile to the Left and so was Jünger. All of his preferred French authors were conservative. He hardly ever mentioned any liberal or Leftist writer with the exception of one brief remark on Malraux when he reported Drieu la Rochelle's statement that Malraux was the only Frenchman with a flair for the atmosphere of civil war. Circumstances limited Jünger's personal acquaintances to those men of letters who did not object to meeting a German officer. Among them was Jouhandeau who found it hard to penetrate Jünger's mind because he was so "difficult to develop," a statement that Jünger resented somewhat as typical of "a photographer of souls." Jouhandeau's marital quarrels form an essential part of his creative work, and none of his readers can ignore the demonic personality of Elise, his wife, who astounded Jünger by calling all modern authors "superior degenerates." This somewhat summary notion Jünger did not share since he often referred to Rimbaud's brilliant and daring life demonstrating "the enthusiastic acceptance of our increasingly dangerous times."

Paying closer attention to the perfection of literary technique than most German writers do, Jünger admired Léautaud as the last of the "classical authors." Léautaud lived in a suburb of Paris in poverty and seclusion until Jünger, with his flair for the odd and unusual, discovered the hermit's hideout. He pleaded the destitute's cause and succeeded in interesting Abel Bonnard and Jean Paulhan in the forgotten man. An interesting conversation rewarded Jünger for his troubles. Léautaud condemned all metaphors, parables and other figures of speech. A novelist should use the direct approach and when he desired to mention rain, simply say: "It rains." Paulhan objected that even store clerks do that, whereupon Léautaud riposted: "*Alors vivent les employés!*" Léautaud sensed

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Jünger's perilous position among his own countrymen and offered him shelter in case of trouble with the Gestapo. This gesture, typical of the "generosity of the poor," moved Jünger to welcome an "outstretched hand" extended from the enemy camp. Jünger concluded that the gap between hostile nations could be bridged only by religion or reason.

The sympathy Jünger felt for the French Right was not extended to those authors who had become champions of the collaboration with Germany. He wondered how many otherwise patriotic and intelligent Frenchmen, as for example Benoît-Méchin, could err so profoundly in their judgment as to choose the obviously wrong side. Jünger believed personal ambition and lust for power were the mainsprings for so fatal a mistake. Such motives did, no doubt, play an important role, but Jünger overlooked the century-old struggle between the liberal and the conservative forces in France. His distaste for men whom he labeled traitors, "sold-old pens," prevented him from recognizing the remarkable talent of Louis-Ferdinand Céline of whom Jünger spoke disparagingly as a mere unkempt individual with a morbid delight for the repulsive, a type "belonging to the stone age."

Jünger's literary contacts were limited, but in other fields he moved freely and paid visits to Picasso and Braque. Picasso was interested to know which "real landscape" had inspired Jünger to depict the somewhat surrealistic scenery of the Cliffs of Marble. He impressed Jünger as a "magician engaged in alchemistic experiments, a wizard with a supernatural vision of the yet unborn and unseen." Modern art is seen here as a prophecy of the eventual degeneration of the human species. "Never before did I understand with the same depressing clarity that the homunculus is no idle invention. The future image of man is here anticipated by means of magic."

This reaction to Picasso's work shows that Jünger does not work with the traditional categories of thought; he tries to interpret the tangible side of things, not as a product of human activities but as a mysterious call from forces hidden within the unknown. These forces are dangerous to man and frighten us with their obscure warning signals that often appear in dreams or situations coming close to dreaming. His own position was conceived by Jünger as a perilous stay at the foremost end of an unfinished bridge where he perceived confused calls from a distant and dark shore. Thus, living a dangerous existence, he found himself "outside of space and time," like Rivarol, whose works he edited. Jünger identified his own position with that of Rivarol when he stated that the romantic authors were divorced from their epoch, looking backward in search of their paradise lost and being threatened by the political forces of their decade which in Rivarol's as well as in Jünger's case represented a deadly menace to these aristocratic foes of the vulgar demos.

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From excursions such as these visits to Picasso and Braque Jünger gladly returned to friendlier places where reason resigned and cast her reassuring light on men and things, and he found in Abel Bonnard an eager pilot through these shallower waters. Jünger's esteem for that talkative and ubiquitous academician might seem strange, but he saw in Bonnard a Voltaire redivivus, a man with an intellectual gaiety that Jünger highly praised as "man's best state of mind."

The time, however, did not allow the undisturbed enjoyment of straight rational thinking. As war moved closer to Paris, Jünger's restless searching for an answer to the secrets of life and death intensified. He tried to obtain information from every possible source; odd ancient volumes telling of shipwreck, earthquakes, and other catastrophes when men had to meet death. Even Abel Bonnard, the skeptic, was to reveal what he experienced in a traffic accident.

Bonnard's smiling skepticism appeared to Jünger as a remarkable achievement of the French, who thereby succeeded in having man's superior faculties penetrate into the elements of human existence. This happy blending of spirit and matter impressed Jünger again and again. He admired the city of Paris as the supreme creation of the harmonious compound of all forces of life. To her Jünger paid the full tribute of his admiration as the "greatest achievement of the collective constructive impulse of the French." Jünger, a lifelong admirer of armed forces and knightly orders, compared the city to the great schools of men, the Prussian General Staff, the British Fleet, and the Jesuit Order. This city had molded many and he, too, considered her as his "second spiritual home"; he felt "as if he had lived there for over five hundred years," belonging to the "millions who gave from their life substance and helped to build her fate like a coral reef."

Yet this picture of Paris was not all bliss, for constantly present with him, as it had been with Rilke, was the inescapable evidence of suffering. "I must never forget that I am surrounded by unhappy people who endure the most profound distress," he noted in his secret diary. And it was this evidence of human misery that operated the profound change in him: "many arms of my stream of life ended in this city as in a bay." His love for the capital of the country which he had fought with great courage set a clock-like mechanism in motion; new thoughts and feelings began to stir in him and he began to consider himself no longer only a German but also a European and even a citizen of the world.

Belief and the Critic

By Samuel J. Hazo

THE TRUE relationship between Catholicism and literary criticism has invariably been complicated by those who attempt to superimpose the nature of one completely upon the other. Such is the error of the dogmatist. But an equally fallacious and futile approach is to regard the problem as a touch-me-not—a problem better left unsolved for reasons foreign to both Catholicism and literary criticism. The first error springs from misdirected enthusiasm or sheer ignorance, and the second from prejudice or intellectual cowardice or both. Each error avoids the reality of the problem and thus defers or actually prevents solution.

The analysis of the true relationship between Catholicism and literary criticism remains an arduous literary endeavor despite the fact that Father Harold C. Gardiner, S.J., has established some laudable, practical standards for the evaluation of fiction, and even though speculative critics like Martin Turnell, Maurice De Wulf, Jacques Maritain and others have given us, within the tradition of Catholicism, some provocative critical and aesthetic insights into the nature of this relationship. The extensive middle ground between the practical and predominantly moral tenets of Gardiner and the theories of Turnell, De Wulf and Maritain still invites profitable exploration. What, for example, are the responsibilities of the Catholic as scholar or as a practical critic in other or more than a purely moral sense? What are the disciplines demanded of a Catholic as an explicator? Are these various responsibilities and disciplines unique for him alone, or are they the common lot of all literary critics?

It will be my purpose to suggest that the Catholic critic differs from other critics—if he differs at all—not so much in method as in sensibility. By "method" I mean the way in which the literary critic (*any* literary critic) masters and uses scholarly and critical apparatus to determine, for instance, textual validity and accuracy and to elucidate meanings in the work of words itself in language that is free of pointless and postured critical jargon. By "sensibility" I mean the critic's awareness to values in literature, that is, to insights into the human situation that are inherent in and derived from a literary experience. Although most considerations of sensibility and method are inextricably involved, I intend to suggest that problems related to method tend to challenge the Catholic critic as critic while problems related to sensibility tend to challenge the Catholic critic as Catholic. Analogously speaking, problems of method may be related to genus while problems of sensibility are related to specific difference.

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It is a truism to say that solving problems of scholarship is pivotal to critical methodology. Problems of scholarship are usually the first ones to confront the critic. Some of these problems are included in the following definition of scholarship formulated by David Daiches. For Daiches, scholarship is that literary activity which "throws light on the social and biographical origins of a work, on the cultural environment out of which it sprang, and on the transmission of the text, and thus often enables the critic to understand in some degree how the work came to be written and to see more clearly the meanings of certain parts of the text." If Daiches' definition is correct, then every scholar, regardless of his faith or school, faces the same disciplines. Scholarship in this sense merely sets the stage for practical literary criticism, and every scholar, Catholic or otherwise, works, as he must, within the limits of his own honesty, accuracy, ingenuity and perseverance with available materials. But the threshold of criticism has not yet been crossed. What is of primary importance at this first stage of methodology is simply the individual's diligence in research and the way in which he is able to interpret his research.

When problems of scholarship have been solved as far as evidence and facilities will permit, the critic is then able to "practice" his art as an explicator. If practical criticism is considered as the explication of text in order to increase understanding and enhance appreciation of a work, it is necessary to consider the method of explication on the one hand and then the understanding created by the explication as evaluative on the other. The former consideration is still a matter of methodology and is, according to my original distinctions, a matter confronting the Catholic critic as critic. But any consideration of explication as evaluative—a goal identified by W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., in "Explication as Criticism" as the critic's main "critical problem" since it is based on the need of advancing "understanding and value as far as possible in union"—necessarily involves a critic's awareness to values and thus challenges his sensibility. Matters relative to sensibility transcend methodology *per se* and challenge the Catholic critic as Catholic.

Explication considered purely as method is governed by two factors. I am assuming at this point that the explicator has been astute enough to avoid Messrs. Wimsatt's and Beardsley's intentional and affective fallacies and to purge himself of the flaws which T. S. Eliot in *The Sacred Wood* ascribed to the criticism of Swinburne, Charles Whibley, and Paul More. In practice these two factors go together, but in theory the explicator's method is to consider the work as an organism in order to show "elements in the writing which combine to make its particular quality" and to consider "the significance of the attitude it is likely to arouse in the experienced and sensitive reader." Although this statement smacks of generality, I suggest that all critics in the practice of their art must work this common clay.

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EVEN THOUGH it is possible to isolate in theory the method of explication within the limits of these two principles, it is not difficult to see to which pole many modern critics have gravitated. Elucidation through an examination of what Coombes has called the "elements in the writing which combine to make its particular quality" has been the approach of numerous modern critics, and terms like "tension," "paradox" and "symbolic action" have become the stock phrases of their trade. Such criticism, which contains much that is truly excellent despite the fact that poet-critics like Karl Shapiro and Mark Van Doren have found little to praise in it, is invariably directed toward a consideration, however partial, of how the poem "works" in the organic sense. Yet it only to the extent that the critic's sensibility suffuses such an approach that his criticism is saved from mere concern with techniques and external form. T. S. Eliot has recently noted in "The Frontiers of Criticism" how arid much modern criticism becomes when sensibility is divorced from a concern with technique in a literary work.

Sensibility remains, therefore, the spiritual force that vitalizes explication. Explication without an awareness to value can readily degenerate into mere concern with word meanings and structural relationships. But an awareness of the full significance of a novel's theme, for example, or of a poem's totality of meaning unites any analysis of word meanings and structural relationships with the work's inner unity and with the concentric circles of import which have this unity as their common center. Explication can then become more than a mere mechanical exercise, and, as I have already noted in a passage from Wimsatt, "understanding and value" can advance "as far as possible in union." Would it be rash to suggest at this point that criticism in the practical sense is perhaps nothing more than the fusion in language of explicative skill and sensibility?

But does the Catholic have any additional assets as a critic? In brief, what is the critical potentiality of a Catholic sensibility? What can a Catholic critic bring to his explication of a work of literature that a Freudian or a Marxist, for example, might lack?

The answer to such questions lies in the nature of the Catholic sensibility itself. I have already stated that the Catholic critic differs from other critics—if he differs at all—not so much in method as in sensibility. I have already defined "sensibility" as an awareness to values in literature. By "values" I mean the unique forms of knowledge, of "*la connaissance poétique*" in the language of Maritain, which literature provides as insights into the nature of man as well as into the cultures created by him.

If literature is what Newman called it—"the manifestation of human nature in human language"—then the most comprehensive critic would be he who would be most sensitive to all that relates to human nature in language fictively used. I suggest that a materialistic critic would be insensitive or indifferent to the spiritual values of George Herbert's *Joseph's Coat*, of Gerard Manley Hop-

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kins' *The Windhover* or Robert Lowell's *Christmas Eve Under Hooker's Statue* simply because his view of human nature is such that it excludes or tries to exclude what touches upon the spirit. I have been told that Marxist critics have already demonstrated the inflexibility of their ideology by completely ignoring the irony of Thomas More's *Utopia* and by literally interpreting the work in a vein foreign to its true meaning. If this claim is correct, the Marxist concept of human nature has in this one regard prostituted and stunted a more comprehensive critical sensibility.

I do not mean to suggest that any Catholic critic by virtue of his Catholicism alone is above such a perversion, although he should be. The "club" instinct is regrettably strong. But a true Catholic sensibility should never be understood to mean a sensitivity to or a preference for the work of Catholics alone. The consideration by a Catholic critic of the work of a Catholic artist—though it may test the aesthetic distance of certain critics—does not and should not by that fact alone imply or compel critical approbation of the work. Such an assumption, rooted in a regressive nominalism, is in fact quite unCatholic and derivative of reasons or feelings that are often not even literary in nature. Martin Turnell has exposed the basic fallacy of such an approach to criticism and at the same time indicated the real nature of a Catholic sensibility.

Thus *in theory*, a Catholic critic should be able to recognize valuable experience wherever he meets it and whatever the general outlook of the writer happens to be. Paradoxical though it may be, the first thing a Catholic must realize is that in the literary order dogma must never be applied dogmatically. To assume that only those experiences are valuable which are completely Christian, is to condemn oneself to sterility at the outset. They may be the most valuable experiences, but they are by no means the only valuable experiences. If we are to be true to the ideal of comprehensiveness, we must be able to sympathize with the fresh experiences that are evolved in the course of civilization. . . . As soon as absolute truths enter the literary order, the critic who is committed to a system exposes himself to two dangers. He tends to praise works which express, or seem to express, the dogmas of his system. Thus theory perverts sensibility. . . . The other error is to condemn writers simply because their outlook is at variance with one's own system.

The true significance of the relationship between the critic and Catholicism is that the latter enriches the former, not by confining him merely to "Catholic matters" but by saving him from an erroneous or partial view of the nature of man—a nature admittedly fallen but redeemed, and, according to the enlightened, just as capable of degeneration as of glory. A less comprehensive view would tend to decrease a critic's sensitivity to these and all the interlying values as they are presented in literature. Catholicism, with its inheritance of the classical and scholastic tradition, is capable of making a critic's sensibility more alert to the

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full range of man's capacity from degradation to sanctity. Again Turnell's words are relevant.

The advantage of a Catholic philosophy is that when properly applied it is capable of enriching the critic, of opening new horizons before him, while a materialist system necessarily impoverishes him and narrows his outlook on account of its exclusiveness. A Catholic philosophy provides the most comprehensive picture of the universe; it is capable of finding a place for 'all experience', particularly for those experiences which materialism is driven to explain away, to discount as abnormal or illusory because they belong to regions whose existence is incompatible with materialism.

Imbued with such a philosophy, the Catholic critic is theoretically capable of developing a sensitivity to all forms of value in literature whether they are reflective of Christian or alien traditions. Although he may dislike certain literary works or regret the paucity of literature which springs from an Incarnational concept of man or which shows "humanity . . . without its wound," in the words of Rivière, he should not for these reasons think himself spared the necessity of explicating accurately those works which reflect other or, for him, less worthy concepts of man. This is not to say that the critic's goal is disinterested appreciation. No criticism can exist permanently in a vacuum. A Catholic critic is bound to have some hierarchy of values (what else gives form to his sensibility?) and to place greater importance on some literary works in terms of their subject matter and method of presentation. But this involves a comparative appraisal of literary worth—a relation of literary value to absolute value. Evaluation in this sense becomes more than the discernment and delineation of values in literature; it becomes assersive and capable of developing into a judgment that includes but may exceed purely aesthetic criteria. Assuming, for example, that the Catholic critic will recognize the worth of various literary experiences and avoid judging one genre by another or one age by another, he will in all probability be drawn to place a higher literary value on works in which evil is recognized by authors as more than a mere social or naturalistic aberration. Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* will in this regard probably impress him as a more valuable literary experience than Camus' *The Stranger*, despite the many other excellences of the latter.

HOWEVER, even though a Catholic sensibility will provide the framework for the formulation of such literary judgments of value, from the standpoint of critical approach and awareness alone, a Catholic sensibility should enable the Catholic critic to be sensitive to any work so long as it provides the perceptive reader with a "valuable experience." A "valuable experience" in literature is essentially one which provides insights into the life of man. That such insights be rooted in dogmatic truth is not necessarily a prerequisite. In literature, as in logic, it is possible to arrive at significant and worthwhile conclusions even

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though one's primary assumptions and premises are fallacious. Mere conformity to dogma by an author should not be a signal for a critic's approval of his work any more than a divergence from dogma should invite his immediate condemnation. A strict adherence to the former would mean, for instance, that every poem in a book like Thomas Walsh's selection of *The World's Great Catholic Poetry* would be automatically extolled. An equally strict adherence to the latter could condemn Byron's *Don Juan*, much of Baudelaire, more of Blake and possibly all of D. H. Lawrence as being unworthy of critical consideration.

Agreement and disagreement by a critic with an author's theological views of or beliefs, therefore, are not the criteria for a Catholic sensibility. In the practice of his art, that is, in explicating a work of literature, the Catholic critic should be concerned with theological considerations *primarily* as they are revealed in the structural facets of a work and then only to the extent that they contribute aesthetically to the work's total meaning. This avoids the danger of considering theology as theology in literature in lieu of a proper concern with theology's aesthetic contribution to the work. Just as a critic, for example, must understand the meaning of every word in a poem as well as every allusion, symbol or image in order to begin to understand it, so must he understand theological allusions and symbols in much the same way if his awareness to all the values in a work is to be comprehensive. It is only in this way that literary judgments as to the comparative value of a work will be, if and when the critic advances them, complete and, above all, literary.

Assuming, therefore, the validity of his scholarship, and his mastery of critical "tools," I suggest that the Catholic critic's *first task* is to imbue his explicative effort with a sensitivity to the work's values in the non-dogmatic sense. He must permit his sensibility as a Catholic to suffuse and direct his skill as an explicator. Such an alliance eschews the error of dogmatism, which in effect paralyzes criticism, and at the same time permits Catholicism to make possible for a critic a more comprehensive approach to literature and its elucidation. But the full significance of the relationship between Catholicism and literary criticism exceeds the problems of approach and explication. Even after a critic has suspended his disbelief and entered into the life of a literary work in order to understand it as completely as possible, even though he remain faithful to his ideal of comprehensiveness and prevent his beliefs from prejudicing or dogmatizing his critical sensibility, he is still faced with the matter of evaluation. In effect, he is still confronted with the problem of relating literary value to absolute value.

Of course, the purely formalistic critic would not readily concede that relating literary value to absolute value is a matter of critical responsibility. For him, the critic's final judgments are aesthetic. But this would be a satisfactory position only if the critic were considering the literary equivalent of carpet patterns. Moreover, the nature of literature itself, to say nothing of the nature of language

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itself, belies the formalistic solution as complete. I make this statement in complete awareness of Herbert Read's recent warning that a critic should not indulge in "moral" judgments. It is important to remember in this regard that the literary work is actually a vision, indeed a vision of the world through the very subjectivity of the artist, to paraphrase Maritain. The character of this vision, its nature as well as the skill with which it is expressed, cannot help but command the attention of the critic in an evaluative sense. Just as the beliefs of the artist condition and shape his vision of what is significant and less significant in the world, so do beliefs enter into a critic's evaluation of that vision after he has fully understood or even while he is understanding it. It not only contradicts the character of the poetic vision but also the denotative and connotative character of language to say that literature in the language of Eliseo Vivas is "merely formal structure devoid of embodied meanings and values." The purely formalistic solution is incomplete because it belittles the possibility of evaluating vision in any but a partial sense, and few critics have been more lucid in their castigation of this shortcoming of formalism than has Nathan Scott in his recent lecture at the Columbia University English Institute.

For . . . great literature does, in point of fact, always open outward to the world, and that which keeps the universe of poetry from being hermetically sealed off from the universe of man is the poet's vision that it incarnates, of species and horizons, of cities and men, of time and eternity. This is why those modern theorists who tell us that the literary work is merely a verbal structure and that its analysis therefore involves merely a study of grammar and syntax—this is why they so completely miss the mark. They forget that writers use language with reference to what they know and feel and believe and that we can therefore understand their poems and novels only if we have some appreciation of how their beliefs have operated in enriching the meaning of the words that they employ. The 'poem-in-itself,' in other words, as merely a structure of language, is simply a naked abstraction, for the real poem, the real novel, is something that we can begin to appropriate only as we seek some knowledge of the context of belief and the quality of the vision out of which it springs and with reference to which the words on the printed page have their fullest and richest meaning.

The implications of Scott's statement are that works of literature are more than interesting syntactical creations and that poems, novels and dramas are not constructed of words as houses are constructed of so many identical and carefully positioned bricks. Thomas Pollack has stressed the same truth by saying that literature is characterized by "evocative symbolism." Springing as it does from what Maritain has perceptively called moments of "creative intuition" in the artist, a work of literature reveals a world transmuted through the artistic imagination. What results is not merely a communication, but a vision, a "verbal icon," a "concrete universal." It seems a truism to say that

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words have semantic as well as syntactical signification, but this is essentially what refutes the formalist. Words not only *are*. They reveal, they suggest, they mean, and in their revelation, their suggestion and their meaning, they often project the critic beyond the realm of explication and into the domain of evaluative judgment. Richard Horchler has expressed this obvious but often ignored or slighted fact in the following statement: "Literature is an art of words, after all, and words have referents outside themselves. Insofar as the literary work involves some conception of reality, viewed and valued by a human being, it must have relevance to other-than-literary views, values and conceptions of reality." In brief, for a critic to apply only ontological or purely formalistic criteria to what springs from the deepest recesses of the spirit of man and whose significance is dependent upon the value of the "conception of reality presented" is to belittle an important dimension of artistic expression.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH has concluded his famous poem, *Arts Poetica*, with the now memorable line, "A poem should not mean/But be." This line could easily serve as a motto for much ontological criticism. It is a tribute to the autonomous nature of art, but as a model for all criticism it is simply inadequate. If *words* not only *are* but *mean* as well (as the aforementioned poem by MacLeish, for example, certainly does), then poems constituted of words not only *are* but *mean* also. In a candid article on the nature of poetic expression, William Rooney arrived at a similar conclusion by stating that a "communicative effect and an aesthetic effect are not mutually contradictory." Poems, emanating as they do from the intuition of the artist, cannot help but mean. Whatever prompted Coleridge to urge his readers to suspend disbelief in order to enter fully into the artistic experience is certainly indicative of the fact that poems in their meaning tend to raise problems of belief or disbelief, if not in the theological sense, then assuredly on the lesser level of acceptance founded on mere credulity. If works of art could not raise such problems, what would be the necessity of suspending disbelief at all even on such a basic level of response? The answer could easily be, as Father Walter Ong has reminded us, that the artistic experience demands the act of "belief-in," an act not of affirmation in the theological sense but of simple credulity—essentially Coleridge's meaning.

Such an act of "belief-in" is really, as I have already stated, the first act of critical approach. This act implies a temporary assent to but not necessarily agreement with the poet's expressed vision of the world. It is this assent or act of "belief-in" which makes the critic's experience of the poet's vision a possibility. However, the act is only preliminary to the solution of problems of greater import. After the critic has assented to and understood the poet's vision to the best of his ability, after he has made Coleridge's act of poetic faith, he may

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choose to exercise his critical prerogative of evaluating that vision. LaDriere and Nathan Scott emphasize this need and indeed identify it as being at the very heart of the critical discipline. "The purpose of criticism," LaDriere has written, "is not . . . immersion in the work, but discourse about its value; its goal is not to experience the work, but to come to terms with experience of it in a distinct cognition which itself requires to be made intelligible in a distinct discourse." Scott has expressed this same imperative in the essay to which I have already alluded.

For, though the literary work is a special sort of linguistic structure, that which holds the highest interest for us is the special seizure of reality toward which this structure is instrumental. It is, in other words, the nature of literature itself that compels the critic finally to move beyond the level of verbal analysis to the level of metaphysical and theological evaluation. On this level, of course, he can establish the propriety of his judgments only by reference to his own insights, his own scale of values, his own sense of what is important in art and in life.

It is here that the problems of evaluation come into existence, and the critic has only two possible ways of reacting to works of art in which problems at the "level of metaphysical and theological evaluation" are raised. First, he may disclaim the necessity of evaluating, as did Eliot in the early essays, saying that the art of explication or elucidation is sufficient and that the poem's value is not for the critic to determine. In other words, the critic may table the matter of evaluation and remain seemingly secure in his role of explicator or literary midwife, although even here, as Leslie Fiedler has shrewdly noted such a critic may be guilty of self-deceit:

The "pure" literary critic, who pretends, in the cant phrase, to stay "inside" a work all of whose metaphors and meanings are pressing outward, is only half-aware. And half-aware, he deceives; for he cannot help smuggling unexamined moral and metaphysical judgments into his "close analysis," any more than the "pure" literary historian can help bootlegging unconfessed aesthetic estimates into his chronicles.

The second alternative is to accept the responsibility of evaluation and to discharge oneself of that responsibility with all the judiciousness that it demands. However, in being judicious, the critic must be careful to avoid judicial dogmatizing and pontification. For the Catholic critic, this warning is particularly meaningful; censorial shortcuts are weak substitutes for critical thoroughness.

In effect, how and when should evaluative critical judgments be made by those who recognize evaluation as an inherent part of the act of criticism? In terms of actual practice, I contend that explication and evaluation may and perhaps should be simultaneously achieved. It is a distinct possibility and a desirable one that explication itself should be evaluative. In this I am only echoing

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a statement which I have already quoted from Wimsatt's "Explication as Criticism." "The extreme theory of explicative didacticism," Wimsatt has written, "cuts apart understanding and value just as the avowed theory of affects—and that is another way of saying that our main critical problem is always how to push both understanding and value as far as possible in union, or how to make our understanding evaluative." However, for purposes of clarity, I will consider the matter of evaluation as a post-explicative function, but the distinction should be regarded as hypothetical.

To admit that evaluation is an essential part of the act of criticism is not to say that this evaluative aspect should supplant the more pronounced modern trend of explicative criticism. It should not. In practice, explication and evaluation should be and usually are constitutive aspects of the same critical function. If it is true, as Helen Gardner has suggested, that no critic should "waste time interpreting what is not thought worth interpretation," then even the first critical contact with a literary work impels the mind toward some type of rudimentary evaluative judgment. It remains the task of subsequent critical analysis to justify or qualify an initial evaluation of a work's quality or lack of it. The final evaluation, which in an inchoate form prompted analysis, often emerges as a vindication of an initial act of judgment corroborated by explication.

However, what problems are imposed upon a critic, particularly a Catholic critic, when questions of moral or theological value are raised in a consideration of a work of literature? In other words, how should such a critic proceed to resolve the practical problems of literature and belief in arriving at an evaluative literary judgment?

This question does have an answer, although the answer is fraught with distinctions. Moreover, the answer is not one that can be reduced to mere nominalisms. I have already shown that evaluative literary judgments are possible only in an atmosphere of true catholicity, and this catholicity should be characterized by nothing less than the empathy and comprehensiveness described by Charles Moeller in an introductory passage of his discerning essay, "Freedom and Truth in Literary Critique," in the fifth volume of Duquesne University's Philosophical Series.

The preliminary step in literary critique must be to set forth the whole truth as it was seen by the artist. If it is true, as Cardinal Mercier said, that every "heresy" contains a spark of truth and that this spark must be discovered, then, before the work of art is run through the rolling mill of a "prefabricated system" of critique, the critic must devote all his care to the investigation of the human datum to which the work of art bears witness. Therefore, he must "put on" the soul of its author in order to penetrate into his universe from within.

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Assuming that the approach of a Catholic critic is characterized by the quality described in the aforesaid passage, what should be his criteria for evaluation? Again a statement from Moeller's essay can serve as an excellent point of departure in arriving at an answer.

The literary judgment proceeds rather by way of attempts to integrate partial truths into the bosom of a more comprehensive truth which is not vague and abstract but concrete because it is artistic, i.e., "incarnated." Accordingly, the order of steps to be taken by the literary critic—an order which is as necessary as it is harmonious—is: (a) to *discover* and express the truth of the literary masterpiece; (b) to *situate* it by *comparing* it with other works, (c) and finally to judge it by integrating it into a complete view of man.

IF CATHOLIC philosophy and the truths that proceed from the very spirit of Christianity provide the most comprehensive picture of man, then a Catholic critic's evaluative judgments of literary works would be strongly if not totally influenced by such a spirit. But here a further distinction must immediately be made. Literature is not a congeries of ideas. What is important in literature is not the idea as idea, as it is, for instance, in philosophy, but the *experience* of the idea. Rather than evaluate the idea as idea, the critic must evaluate the experience of the idea as an inherent part of his experience of the whole work. Ideational values in this sense become part of the view of man presented by the artist. It is this view of man by the artist that the critic can discuss evaluatively. This view of man must be shared and penetrated by the critic and then evaluated in relation to a vision of the whole man. The ideational values that are rife in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, for example, must be seen not in isolation but as being interwoven into a portrait of a pathetic and, possibly, a tragic human being named Willie Loman. But, in an evaluative sense, Willie Loman is pathetic or tragic because his own weaknesses and the social pressures that have aggravated them have compromised what we recognize as the inner dignity of man. Without an awareness on our part of what a man like Willie Loman should have been, could have been or might have been (an awareness springing from our concept as critics of the nature of man), we would be at a loss to explain why Loman's plight arouses pathetic or tragic feelings within us. Moreover, this is a spiritual and not a nominal endeavor. "If literature is the mirror of man," writes Moeller, "the critic must make this mirror shine over man in all his dimensions and keep in mind that every work of art, even if it is squarely opposed to his own personal convictions, contains fragments of humanity." Moeller adds that the critic must always be sensitive to "the presence or absence of the *soul* in the work, the soul in all its dimensions, as the meeting place and bridal chamber of the world here below with the world above, of the community of men with a glimpse of God."

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Seeing and experiencing literature in such a way demands a sensitivity that is equally aware of the presence of truth and love in a work regardless of nominalisms that divide. In another part of this essay I said that the enlightened Catholic critic is saved by his Catholicism from having a partial or erroneous view of man. To him, the nature of man is as capable of degeneration as of glory. He should be sensitive to the fact that these two poles establish limits between which the artist works. All that the critic should ask is that the artist's view of man remain a view of *man* and not of something more or less than man. If the critic reaches the conclusion that the artist's view of man is exaggerated or perverted or limited, the norm against which he is able to make such a statement is his vision of the whole man. In Kenneth Clark's discussion of the evaluation of the nude in art, there is a statement that is germane and analogous to this point. Clark says that "every time we criticize a figure, saying that a neck is too long, hips are too wide or breasts too small, we are admitting, in quite concrete terms, the existence of ideal beauty." The "ideal beauty" alluded to by Clark is equivalent in a sense to a critic's view of the whole man. Unlike the beauty of the nude, which is relative and changes from generation to generation or age to age, the view of man held by the Catholic critic proceeds from the spirit of Christianity and does not fluctuate. Only a critic's finite and flawed nature or his divergences from the purifying and clarifying moments of grace can prevent his being connotated with that norm.

Actually, the norm against which the Catholic critic must make his judgments is essentially the norm of charity. He cannot content himself with establishing the conventional battle lines of disagreement and hiding behind them. He must proceed to the heart of the work he is considering; he must be able to see beneath the surface of the work. Consider, for example, the incisiveness and the charitable penetration and insight of the following brief critique from an essay by Phillip Scharper on such naturalistic writers as Norman Mailer, James Jones and Nelson Algren:

For it should be noted that most American naturalists, however illogically, have written out of a passionate moral concern which deserves our understanding and respect. If the world they picture is often sordid, there lies beneath the surface an intense conviction that it need not be, and should not be. If they show the spiritually maimed who inhabit the twilight lands of Chicago's South Side, or Schofield Barracks, or the expensive campus of a large State university, they at least do not mistake that twilight for the blaze of noon. Almost without exception the major naturalistic novels have shown in modern man the agony which feeds upon its own illusions. It is surely significant that the naturalists, in an increasingly money-conscious civilization, have repeatedly proclaimed . . . that the possession of *things* cannot make man happy. Obviously this

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is not the fullness of the gospels, but it is more congenial to the Christian than the naive evangels of success preached all too persuasively by many contemporary educators, business men and ad-writers.

I do not single out this passage because I am in agreement with it. I think, however, that the critic has avoided a merely nominalistic view and has tried to evaluate the view of man presented by the naturalistic writers in relation to a view of man that he thinks is truly Christian. He has seen what Moeller has called the "fragments of humanity" in the work of writers whose convictions are not the same as his own, and he has rendered an evaluation of a view of man that has emanated from artists with these convictions in a manner that strikes me as being not only sensitive and charitable but literary.

How can any writer reach fixed conclusions on a subject so fraught with the need of making accurate distinctions in thousands of particular instances where the problem of literature and belief is raised? Indeed, a conclusion might suggest that the problem has been solved, when actually it is a problem that must be solved as often as it is confronted. At best, I have only synthesized and advanced a few suggestions that could possibly be adapted toward the problem's timeless need of solution. But the problem must be faced and considered, and it must be faced and considered in terms of the present. As LaDriere has warned, "Criticism is judgment, not a memory of judgment, still less the reconstruction of a judgment that might have occurred, or of one that did occur in the past." To avoid or shirk the need of making literary judgments amounts to a denial of the problem, and to deny the problem for whatever reason is to deny to criticism not only its contemporaneity but also a good deal of its value.

Review-Article:

Laudanum or Poetry?

Francis Thompson: Man and Poet. By J. C. Reid. The Newman Press. \$4.25.

IT IS DIFFICULT to believe that the author of *The Mind and Art of Coventry Patmore* has written this deplorable volume on Francis Thompson. Mistaken allusions to Thompson in the Patmore volume are negligible compared with the appalling misinterpretations of Thompson the poet and misstatements concerning the man in these pages. Derived from secondary sources, the volume will appeal to those who revel in tales of drug addicts and neurotics and have little interest in objective truth. Unfortunately, many reviewers have mistaken its apparent scholarship for the reality. The blurb on the jacket states that Thompson's life "was a mixture of depravity and saintliness, laudanum and poetry." But the mixture, as presented, is over-generous in portions of depravity and laudanum and unduly meager in saintliness and poetry in an attempt to place Thompson and his work "in a perspective which is acceptable today"—no compliment, surely, to the discernment of prospective readers. There is a gracious acknowledgment of cooperation given the author at Boston College when the Patmore holdings and such Thompson letters and MSS as pertain to Patmore were placed at his disposal during a brief visit when he was preparing his book on Patmore. Unfortunately, very little of that time was spent on the Thompson collection which contains abundant evidence of the falsity of Mr. Reid's major conclusions. Thompson's religion is described as chiefly a matter of feeling and fondness for externals, with little grasp of essentials. Even in "The Hound of Heaven" evidence is found that the poet's religion in his London slum days, "although not abandoned, was clung to largely out of habit." And yet, towards the end of the volume we read that the basic reality in Thompson's life "was his deep and abiding religious faith, which was the source of genuine power."

The late Wilfrid Meynell frequently remarked that the poet's was the strongest will he ever encountered. But Mr. Reid would have us believe that "Thompson's deficiency was largely one of will." The author cites the statement by Alice Meynell who certainly knew the facts: "Not one of Francis Thompson's poems, except perhaps 'Dream-Tryst' . . . was written with the aid of opium." "But the matter is not as simple as that," says Mr. Reid, and straightway he invokes various theories, medical and psychological, to complicate the matter. Only by recognizing the results of laudanum in Thompson's poetry, Mr. Reid claims, can it be understood. There was no "cure" in the poet's case, he asserts, although from Storrington Thompson wrote to Meynell that he had completely conquered the drug and no longer feared it. But at this time, according to Mr. Reid, the poet's whole being cried out "for the bleak companionship of vagrants, for the life-in-death of the Embankment by night, and above all the dulling clasp of the drug." But when he returned to London from Storrington and during the last decade of his life in London, Thompson made no attempt to revert to his old haunts and the enforced companionship of his outcast days. The mere remembrance of them was a torture, as recorded in notebooks, several passages in prose and poetry, and in the terrifying description of "that nightmare time" in "Sister Songs." During

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two years in London between Storrington and Pantasaph, Thompson reverted to drugs in a limited measure. But during four years in Pantasaph, Archbishop Kenealy told me, he visited the poet every morning, noon and evening, and detected no sign of drugs. Mr. Reid with unwarranted caution states that at Pantasaph the poet "was deprived of the drug either wholly or *partially*, for *perhaps* four years." [Italics mine.] After his return to London, early in 1897, there is evidence that until the end of 1898 Thompson took no laudanum and it is the opinion of Pierre Danchin—the result of original research—that probably he did not revert to drugs until 1900, when he took only small doses to sustain him during his last ten years while producing a prodigious number of anonymous essays and book reviews. It is evident from these facts that there was no permanent cure in Thompson's case. But his temporary abstention for three successive periods spanning nearly a decade, was a tremendous victory and a manifestation of extraordinary will-power.

In one of the notebooks now at Boston College Thompson wrote: "To be the poet of the Return to Nature is something: but I would be the poet of the return to God." Quoting the latter part of this entry, Mr. Reid comments that it is "scantily developed in his essays, or in his poetry." No instance is cited from the essays, where it would be easy to prove the opposite. The reason given for this failure in poetry is that "most of the poetry is about himself, Alice Meynell or his own poetry." But there are several poems about himself wherein Thompson is clearly "poet of the return to God," such as: "Dread of Height," "By Reason of Thy Law," "Love's Almsman Plainteth His Fare," "From the Night of Forebeing," "Any Saint," "*Ad Castitatem*," "Retrospect," and numberless passages in poems on other subjects. There is, also, "In No Strange Land," of which it is said with dogmatization more confident than convincing: "This, unfinished or not, unrevised or not, is Thompson's most perfect poem." And "The Hound of Heaven" belongs in this category on the basis of the poet's commentary—with which Mr. Reid so confidently disagrees—that the poem "embodies a worldwide experience in an individual form of that experience; the universal becoming incarnated in the personal." If one can see no evidence of a return to God in Thompson's treatment of Alice Meynell and womanhood in the sonnet sequences "Love in Dian's Lap" and "*Ultima*," compared with similar themes in Byron, Shelley, Swinburne, Keats, *et alii*, there would seem to be no point in belaboring the obvious. Particularly in the "Motto and Invocation," Thompson declares himself "poet of the return to God" when his own poetry is his theme, as he is in "Judgment in Heaven," "*Laus Amara Doloris*," several poems in *The Man Has Wings* and numberless passages in poems on other subjects.

A four-page interpretation of the "Ode to the Setting Sun" is an incredible example of gratuitous reading into a poem a meaning as foreign to the poem as it is to the poet who wrote it. From a single apostrophe of the ode it is clear that the sun is, throughout, a symbol of Christ: "Thou art of Him a type memorial/ Like Him thou hangs't in dreadful pomp of blood/ Upon thy Western rood." But the author assures us—acknowledging his indebtedness to a happily unpublished Ph.D. thesis: "The emotional direction of the ode becomes plainer if we see the sun as a symbol of opium and the whole poem as a lament for the passing away of what had been for Thompson the sustainer of his personal universe." Concerning the manner of this great ode we are told: "It is pieced to-

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gether with exotic coinages and odd Latinisms, like a clever adolescent playing tricks with newly acquired words, or a quiz-kid astonishing adults with his knowledge of the dictionary." After this appraisal, frivolous as it is gratuitous, the author makes use of a rather hackneyed device to embarrass those who differ, by asserting that the poem, praised by Browning, Alice Meynell and Patmore, is "impressive mainly to those who have not read much poetry."

Without knowing how much poetry makes a bushel it is difficult to challenge the assertion that "the main harvest of Storrington was poetry, bushels of it." This playful exaggeration is explained, in part, by attributing to the Storrington period (April 1889 to February 1890) such poems as "A Fallen Yew," inspired by an incident that occurred on September 25, 1891; "To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster," by the death of Cardinal Manning on January 14, 1892; "To My Godchild," by the birth of Francis Meynell on May 12, 1891; and "The Sere of the Leaf," written at the end of 1890 and not inspired, as Mr. Reid says, by Thompson's meeting with Katherine Tynan.

In his treatment of the sonnet sequences, "Love in Dian's Lap" and "*Ultima*," inspired by Alice Meynell, a strange comparison is made between Thompson's theme and Patmore's, praising the latter's realism, as one "who joyed in the physical pleasures of marriage," and ridiculing Thompson's "bloodless abstraction of a healthy, living woman, a 'pencilling mamma' and happy wife." But Patmore in "*Legem Tuam Dilexi*," sings of love consistent with chastity as more intense than the other love because it confines the "self-dissipating" wave of "natural sense" within the "artful dykes" of restraint and thus quickens the whole being. There is no lack of intensity in many of the poems to Alice Meynell—such as the opening stanza of "*Manus Animam Pinxit*"—and it is most uncritical to describe them as "whipped-up feeling" expressed in "high falutin'" language. There is, for instance, "whipped-up feeling" in "Holocaust," when the poet, true to Heaven and to the Lady, renounces his love and calls God to witness: "My soul cries the uncomprehended cry/ When the red agony oozed in Olivet." The author, on this subject, is as mistaken as he was in his volume on Patmore when he spoke of "virgin marriage" as "an un-Catholic idea." A revision of such views, bringing them into closer conformity with Catholic teaching, would help toward a more balanced criticism of love poetry devoid of sex.

Anxiety about "his bright sciential idolatry" in the "Orient Ode," which Mr. Reid mentions, was the result of the poet's scrupulosity or of his erroneous conviction in his later days that all his writings were futile, "save such as were explicitly a confession of faith." It can in no way justify the shocking impression that in this deeply religious poem, "the poet seems less a Christian on his knees before the consecrated Host than a sun-worshipper hymning the potency of his god." Equally perverse is the interpretation of the opening stanza in which the sun—in its rising, its progress during the day, and its setting—is a symbol of the consecrated Host in Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In these lines the various elements of the analogy between the symbol and the reality are sustained with rare success. Says Mr. Reid: "If we stand back from the image for a moment, and divest it of some of its directly religious appeal, we find that the use of the Benediction service is fanciful rather than imaginative." In other words, divest the image of its directly religious appeal, extract from it its chief imaginative element and the result is merely fanciful. This is not to rebuke the poet, but the reader—and his tutor. As usual, Mr. Reid finds in the "Orient Ode,"

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as in nearly all of Thompson's work, "passages that recall the laudanum-prompted synaesthesia of earlier poems."

In his criticism of "An Anthem of Earth," in which Mr. Reid seems to confuse sadness with melancholy, he is at his critical worst. This ode is not the poet's best work and it is cluttered with his stylistic faults. But neither is it a "lengthy neo-pagan threnody of earth and death," that is "almost completely barren of sustaining religious feeling," unless the lines that are the keynote of the poem be disregarded: "In a little sight, in a little sight,/ We learn from what in thee is credible/ The incredible, with bloody clutch and feet/ Clinging the painful juts of jagged faith." To say that in the poem Death "shows itself as 'Pontifical Death,' his [the poet's] only chance of oblivious rest," is a complete distortion of Thompson's idea that Death is the bridge-maker between earth and heaven: "Pontifical Death, that doth the crevasse bridge/ To the steep and trifled God." And yet we are told: "The poem is the relentless pursuit of Death as peace; despite the assurance of regeneration, it is not resurrection Thompson seeks at the end of the poem, but oblivion." The ending is: "My cell is set/ Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is ended/ In a little peace." It is a new sort of oblivion that is compatible with "a little peace." The regrettable flippancy of the appraisal of imagery in this poem merits no rebuttal. It reads: "Here and there Thompson puts on his playboy-of-the-western-stars costume again, echoing his 'Shelley' essay."

Criticism of "The Hound of Heaven" is relatively balanced, although negatived to a degree by a later remark that the poem is "by no means free from fustian and excess," and by quoting with approval the observation of Martin Turnell that "the language of the poem is tired, effete and stale." The question of Thompson's "deliberate borrowing," in this ode, will not be taken seriously by anyone familiar with his embarrassment in discovering that an image in the Proem of "Sister Songs" was an unconscious imitation from Patmore. Finding that he could not disengage it without injury to the passage, a note of "acknowledgment to a Poet rich enough to lend to the poor," was published with the poem. Apropos resemblances between Thompson and certain seventeenth-century poets, Holbrook Jackson wrote: "It is known that he resembled such poets before he had made himself acquainted with their work." The most incongruous of several gratuitous detections of drug in this volume, is one in "The Hound of Heaven." Quoting the lines beginning: "Yea, faileth now even dream/ The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist," lines clearly referring to the failure of poetry to satisfy the soul's longing, Mr. Reid believes that: "Thompson was also thinking of laudanum as well as poetry." If the reader doubts this, he is assured that "the references to *weeds* and *flowers* in the lines wondering if God is a jealous God, should remove it." "Ah! is Thy love indeed/A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,/ Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?" Toward the end of the volume, "The Hound of Heaven" is dismissed with the condescending admission that the poem is manifestly sincere, "even though to modern taste, its expression may seem to show undue softness of feeling and lack of incisiveness"—an unintended indictment of modern taste, surely.

The author asserts that Thompson's poetic inspiration ended in 1893 as a result of Patmore's influence in *Religio Poetae*, which forced the younger poet to face a vision of life and truth that was beyond his power to express poetically—that "poetry and religion were much more than escape-lanes" and that "Love

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is no abstract thing, but lives only in relation to some concrete reality." Such a vision could scarcely be new to the poet of "The Hound of Heaven" and "Love in Dian's Lap." Moreover, after the impact of *Religio Poetae*, according to a chronology of events (1893-1897) in a notebook at Boston College, we read: "1893. Poetry Returns." The return was brief, but long enough to produce, as recorded, "Any Saint" and "*Assumpta Maria*" which has no "quotations from the Litany of the Blessed Virgin," but from sources named by the poet in a letter quoted by his biographer. In 1894, after a season of aridity dispelled by visits of the Meynells and Coventry Patmore, the chronology records "After Her Going," "The Cloud's Swan-Song" and nearly all the poems of the sonnet sequence "*Ultima*." Toward the end of this supposed period of unproductiveness, "All Flesh" was written and also "In No Strange Land," which the author describes as "almost alone of Thompson's poems that might be called mystical."

The best answer to the recurrent charge in these pages that Thompson was blind to his faults is the evidence of *limae labor* in his painstaking and scrupulous effort to rid himself of his stylistic faults, evident in numberless rough drafts in notebooks and MSS at Boston College and in many others that I have seen, with sometimes as many as ten alternate words, expressions or lines from which a final selection was made.

One of the most extravagant statements in the volume is this: "Although he did not know it, he [Thompson] was to become spiritually one of a band of young literary men, the 'beat generation' of the late eighties and nineties. . . who were pursuing the decadent muse through the sinuous corridors of disordered lives." Osbert Burdett is cited as sharing this opinion when he wrote that Thompson "was, critically considered, the most decadent of writers." But Burdett explains: "The term is thus used to describe 'the learned corruption of language.'" And immediately preceding the quotation, Burdett stated: "He fell from poverty to beggary, relieved by opium, but his sordid experiences were not sought for their own sake and left him unsoiled." Thompson's contempt for the cult of "Art for Art's sake," is strongly expressed in such essays as "Nature's Immortality," "The Way of Imperfection," "Form and Formalism," "Sanctity and Song," "Paganism Old and New," and especially in three MSS at Boston College—a review of Dowson's poetry, an "Outline of a Projected Poem," and "Analogies Between God, Nature, Man and the Poet." In the poem, "No Singer of His Time," it is particularly the poets of the 1890's whom Thompson excoriates. It is clear why Holbrook Jackson, a specialist in this period, concluded: "Francis Thompson, product as he is of the poetic impulsion of the Nineties, cannot be located there." The basic reason is given: "Few poets, indeed, of any time, have surpassed his skill or the prodigality of his literary inventiveness; but, beyond that, the spirit of the hour breathed into his verse a new avowal of mysticism, and it informed his orthodoxy with so sweet and beautiful a sense of life that those who were old in the convention of Rome must have marvelled at the beauty of their inheritance." And again: "Francis Thompson is, of course, just one more manifestation of the external mystery of faith, and in his greatness he is of no time and all time." Holbrook Jackson, be it noted, was not a co-religionist. Although he gives an impressive list of non-Catholics who were enthusiastic in their praise of Thompson's work, the author contends that Thompsons' popularity is chiefly the result of the non-literary enthusiasm of his co-

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religionists—"more especially priests"—whose "fulsome praise" is due to the fact that "they prize his doctrine" and are impressed by "the furniture of Catholicism—the cult of the Virgin, the liturgy of the Church, the vessels of ritual, sacerdotal piety." The priests especially mentioned by name as guilty of this unbalanced criticism are: Father T. H. Wright, a minister of the Church of Scotland; Father [Msgr.] John O'Connor, whose only writing on Thompson is an objective commentary on "The Mistress of Vision" with no praise of the poet, fulsome or otherwise; and the present writer. In this volume and in his volume on Patmore the author quotes the same lengthy passage dealing exclusively with Thompson's faults, from Patmore's review of *Poems* in the *Fortnightly Review*. This excerpt is cited as "balanced and judicious" judgment, contrasting with "claims made subsequently for Thompson's poetry by some of his co-religionists." But Patmore's review, in passages not quoted by Mr. Reid, is enthusiastic in praise of the younger poet's work, which "ought to place him, even should he do no more than he has done, in the permanent ranks of fame with Cowley and Crashaw." In the chapter dealing with Thompson's style, his poetry, with its "rag-bag quality," is characterized as "artificial," "tired" and "second-hand," with imagery "suggesting the phantasmagoric parade of a laudanum-dream." This sort of thing ranges over seventeen pages, after which the author concludes the chapter with a page and a half of totally inadequate treatment of Thompson's "genuine poetic talent." This is a fair example of the disproportion in the treatment of Thompson's faults characteristic of the whole volume, converting it into an attack rather than a perceptive, balanced study.

There is relief in the remark concerning Thompson's prose of his last decade—"the laudanum fantasies" have, at last, "almost completely disappeared." The quoted bibliography of uncollected reviews, 1896-1907, does not include those discovered during the last eleven years. The number contributed to the *Academy* is now 326 instead of 221; to the *Athenaeum*, 54 instead of 32; and to other periodicals, 75. Besides this incredible total of 455 articles crowded into the last ten years of Thompson's life, there are undoubtedly others that have not as yet been identified. From this great number of "what are mainly occasional book reviews," according to the author, one of the earliest and least characteristic essays, "Bunyan in the Light of Modern Criticism," is cited to give a semblance of truth to the assertion that Thompson is a "crusading critic, even a propagandist," because of his "Catholic concerns." The bulk of this work was for the *Academy*, *Athenaeum* and other secular publications where the least sign of a Catholic crusader or propagandist in copy submitted to these eminently Victorian periodicals would be immediately and finally rejected. The very opposite of the author's opinion of these reviews is crystal clear to anyone who has read them. As a critic, Thompson entered into no formal controversy with those whose views were in opposition to his own. But he artlessly, firmly and effectively proposed his own views. He never obtruded his principles unnecessarily. Because he so seldom invoked them explicitly, it is concluded that he had no principles. No example is given to substantiate the remark that there is little in Thompson's articles "that may not be found in the writings of a score of competent book-reviewers of the time." Nowhere in Thompson's notebook or papers is there any evidence of this. But there are reams of quotations from books reviewed with comments of unfailing originality and freshness of view. True, Thompson did not reject the sane and competent criticism of his contemporaries, with a flair

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for self-conscious originality and sensationalism not always lacking in the present volume.

Throughout this volume the author variously describes Thompson's poetry. His liturgical poems bear "a startling resemblance to the verse of the Spasmodics"; his odes abound in "a jumble of inappropriate or barely appropriate figures"; his imagery is a "phantasmagoric parade of a laudanum-dream"; his religious vision is warped by morbidity; his love-poetry is "gelid and unreal" and his "countless borrowings . . . are responsible for the rag-bag quality of much that he wrote." From such a "Thompsonian conglomerate," how could there emerge six poems which the author acknowledges as "enduring poetry"? On the last page, Mr. Reid sheds his academic gown for a prophet's robe and announces that "the greater part of his [Thompson's] poetry has already faded, and is unlikely ever to arouse interest again." "The wise gods do sometimes smile," wrote Thompson, "when critics are cock-sure." Happily a corrective of this volume has already appeared in France, *Francis Thompson: la vie et l'oeuvre d'un poète*, by Pierre Danchin, *Professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de Nancy*, who, for his scholarly research on Thompson at the Sorbonne was awarded the degree *doctorat ès lettres* with the highest possible distinction, *très honorable*. Another competent scholar, Dr. Paul van Kuykendall Thomson, whose graduate work on Thompson eminently qualifies him for the task, is preparing a volume on Thompson's life and work, soon to be published.

Boston College

Terence L. Connolly, S.J.

Book Reviews:

The Ibsen View

Night Music. By Sven Stolpe. Sheed and Ward. \$4.50.

RATHER pretentiously labeled on its jacket as "a fiction," Sven Stolpe's *Night Music* proves to be a well-made novel in no way departing from ordinary novelistic techniques. With some justice, critics have frequently compared his works to Mauriac's and Greene's, since he, too, deals with inextricably intertwined spiritual and psychic problems of tortured European Catholics caught in the fell clutch of grim contemporary circumstance—a Dostoyevskian world apparently unknown, or at least unexplored, by American Catholic writers.

Yet it seems to me that Stolpe's cultured bourgeois milieu suggests more than any other a twentieth-century projection of Ibsen's. Though the present novel is apparently set in Central Europe, (to judge by the Germanic names and the predominant Catholicism), the atmosphere remains somberly Scandinavian. Herbert Falk, a once liberal professor risen to ultra-conservative prime minister of his unnamed country and infuriated by rebellion in his own family, recalls Kroll in *Rosmersholm*, while his idealistic son, yearning to free the common people, is won over to Communism by a peasant, Rebecca West. His neglected wife, driven to hypochondria by his indifference, suggests Mrs. Solness in *The Master Builder*. Their daughter Regina (unlike her namesake in *Ghosts*) is an incipient Hedda Gabler, with undertones of Strindberg's Miss Julie. Likewise, the prime minister's apparently devoted secretary, secretly a cold-blooded Communist, in his effect on the Falk family seems a more consciously destructive Gregers Werle.

Stolpe, however, views these people and other well-drawn characters in terms of eternity and thus is able to end on a more positive note than Ibsen's bleak despair. The familiar theme of long-hidden sins of the father being visited on the children is worked out in terms of salutary expiation, chiefly through the aid of a shrewd Benedictine afflicted by a Friar Tuck appearance. Through bitter experience Falk learns the meaning of humility, his wife recognizes her own deep-hidden spiritual pride, and on the last page even Regina seems (rather unconvincingly) on the way to overcoming her morbid hatred for her father.

Meanwhile the reader has been caught up in a close-knit plot interweaving a Communist-inspired national crisis with the personal agonies of the Falk family, all revealed in penetrating analysis and frequently caustic dialogue. Mr. Stolpe's narrative powers combined with genuine spiritual insight give the novel appeal on both levels.

Roger B. Dooley

The Roseate Hue

The Symbolic Rose. Barbara Seward. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. \$5.00.

ERNST CURTIUS in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* revealed the wealth of material still to be explored in a systematic treatment of symbols. In a work of such scope it was impossible for him to describe the

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changing connotations each age might give to all the tropes he treated. His book pointed to the need for concentrating upon a single symbol to see what stylistic variations occurred as authors in successive periods made use of the same figure.

The Symbolic Rose does just this. Barbara Seward holds that "the wasteland has been so prevailing a symbol of our era that it is surprising as well as encouraging to find it rivaled by the rose." With her evidence in hand she does not hesitate to affirm that "the rose symbol [is] a central expression of current times."

The tracing of this thesis, as one can readily conceive, falls easily into three divisions: the introduction of the symbol in pagan literature, culminating in its use by Dante; its development in modern works through a chapter entitled "The Romantic Heritage"; and lastly, the complex use of the rose by contemporary British novelists and poets. But the chronological treatment of the theme does not lure the author into a "progress." She is always careful to distinguish the use of the rose as a simple figure of speech from the more complicated nuances of its handling as a symbol.

Seward finds that the rose's appearance in classical literature never attained symbolic complexity. Such a development was only reached when it was adapted to Christian purposes. "In fact, so important has this alteration been that the early Catholic uses of the pagan flower can most properly be said to blossom at the literary fountainhead of Western roses."

Any discussion of medieval symbolism naturally culminates in Dante. Dante's rose becomes the norm for the rest of the book: "... the final flower of the *Comedy* was to be a major influence not only on subsequent Catholic symbolists but also on symbolists whose values and insights were remote from Dante's."

While roses were plentiful in the literature of the Renaissance and the subsequent three centuries, the multifoliate blossom of the medievalists was reduced to a simple reference. It was not until the French symbolists began seeking objects for their transcendental longings that the intricacy of the past was revived and this field became "the immediate soil and substance from which British symbols were to grow."

The first of the moderns to be studied is Yeats whose early work is bathed in a roseate hue. While one cannot forget nor overlook the influence of Blake on the Irish poet, it was Yeats' adherence to the Rosicrucian Order of the Golden Dawn which gave him a means of ordering experience on a spiritual plane. At the same time "the complex flower of Yeats' early work is unique among the rose symbols of the major writers in expressing less often reconciliation than the suspension of meanings in unresolved discord."

The chapter called "The Contemporary Symbol" traces the use of the rose with variations of overtones in the writings of such different authors as Graves, Sitwell, Thomas, Yates, Woolf, Forster, Bowen, Green, Greene, and Lawrence. The last two chapters in the book, devoted to the work of Eliot and Joyce, painstakingly point out the antithetical use of the Dantean rose in the major works of these most influential of English symbolists. One of the most delightful surprises of this book is the insight offered on Joyce because of his frequent reference to the rose symbol.

It goes without saying that the author who follows Dante closest is Eliot. Though there is nothing startling about this, still Eliot's gradual enrichment of the rose by his precise associations has resulted "in a method at once original and

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important in modern literature." Seward thinks that "Eliot . . . is less objective than he believes and is in many ways a product of the romantic movement he has largely rejected. But it is probably because rather than in spite of this that his has been a major contribution to contemporary symbolism."

There is little about this book which is new to the knowledgeable student of western world literature. Nor can one without hesitation accede to the statement that the rose is central to modern literature. The collection of a multiplicity of references to one subject need not lead to the conclusion that that subject is the most important figure in an age. Undoubtedly, the study of at least ten other major symbols might produce an equal number of references which would emphasize their importance also. On the other hand, one cannot ignore the rose today nor fail to see how the influence of Dante in contemporary writing has obliterated the innocuousness of Renaissance and later connotations.

What is generally valuable in this study is two-fold. Made super-conscious of the use of images by our contemporary commentators, we are fortunate to have this book on such an important symbol as the rose so painstakingly anthologized for reference. And again, in pursuing her roseate quest through its diverse flowerings, Seward has carefully noted the degree of complication which has germinated in various eras and what changes have resulted in the use of the symbol from one period to another. How the literature of our age has profited from the example of the sophisticated Dante is forcefully shown in the chapters on Eliot and Joyce. In these latter day traditionalists, the "rose of untold centuries" offers "an organization at once definite and elastic from the diffuse distresses and discontents of the age."

Mount St. Agnes College

Sister M. Cleophas, R.S.M.

A Spiritual Evolution

Drottning Kristina (Queen Christina), *Maximer. Les Sentiments Héroïques*
Edited and translated [from French into Swedish] by Sven Stolpe. *Acta Academiæ Catholicæ Suecanae*: I. Stockholm: A. Bonniers, 1959.

QUEEN CHRISTINA of Sweden arrived in Rome in 1655 and—aside from a few excursions to her homeland as well as to Germany and France—stayed in that eternal city until her death, in 1689. In 1680, she had her secretary collect and edit a large number of her "Maxims," which had accumulated over the years. Originally published by Arckenholtz, Christina's eighteenth century biographer, the latest French edition was prepared and published by C. Bildt, in 1906, under the title, *Pensées de Christine*.

Sven Stolpe, the contemporary Swedish novelist and historiographer, points out in his Introduction to the present edition that there exist a great number of variants of Christina's "Maxims." Copies of these can be found in the Azzolino collection of the Swedish National Archives and the Swedish Royal Library in Stockholm, in the library of the University of Upsala, and in several other places. It is Stolpe's contention that Bildt's edition of 1906 suffers from the editor's lack of familiarity with the complete source material and that in particular he ignored the version preserved in the Stockholm Royal Library. This latter version, according to Stolpe, is of special significance because in it the Queen

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refuted or disclaimed many of the maxims which figure prominently as Christina's definitive convictions in Bildt's edition.

As a matter of fact, a careful study of Christina's "Maxims" reveals that they contain a great many seemingly contradictory statements. On the one hand, some seem to espouse and endorse a semi-pagan stoic form of hero-worship, while others express distinctly Catholic mystical sentiments. The question then arises: which of these sentiments is the more genuine? And how can the contradiction between Christina's espousal of Stoicism and Christian mysticism be resolved?

To answer these questions, Stolpe engages in a brief and very illuminating discussion of Christina's intellectual and spiritual development. Prior to her abdication in 1654, her intellectual formation had been largely in conformity with the general intellectual climate of her age. From her close friend, the French diplomat Chanut, we learn that the Queen "spoke with enthusiasm in the manner of the Stoics of that pre-eminence of virtue which is the cause of our supreme happiness in this life." In her childhood, Christina had received an education which combined Christian with Stoic elements. As a young girl, she had been an avid reader of the works of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius as well as of those contemporary humanists in whom the principles of Stoic ethics lived on. At about the same time the Jesuits had developed the moral theological system of "Molinism" which, without denying the supreme necessity of divine grace, attributed great significance to the autonomous forces and resources of human nature in general and of the individual human person in particular. And we know that Christina, while still in Stockholm, was in close contact with Molinist thought and with some of its representatives.

It is thus probably correct to assume with Stolpe that Christina did not become a convert to Catholicism as the result of some existential "crisis" but rather because she found in Roman Catholic theology and philosophy a greater recognition of the relative freedom and the dignity of the human person than was granted to the believer by the dogmatic theology of Swedish Protestantism. The humanistically colored Catholicism which Christina embraced seemed to permit her to retain to a large extent certain ancient ideals of heroic virtue and honor which had been instilled in her by the authors of Roman antiquity. Stolpe goes so far as to assert that Christina was actually never able to accept in full the doctrines of the Incarnation and Redemption as well as the Catholic teaching on the state of Purgatory.

A real "crisis" occurred nonetheless in the life of Christina as a result of her encounter with "Quietism," that popularized form of heterodox mysticism which was fathered by the Spaniard, Miguel de Molinos, and subsequently adopted by Madame de Guyon and her followers and—in much more moderate form—by Archbishop Fénelon of Cambrai, in France. Christina had made the acquaintance of Molinos; he had in fact become her spiritual director, and when, in 1685, he was arrested, tried, and condemned by the Inquisition, she did not hesitate to speak out in defense of his views. In short, Christina had found in Quietism a form of religious devotion whose undogmatic simplicity with its emphasis on "pure love" greatly appealed to her. This attraction persisted despite her subsequent disavowal of the Quietists' contention that the true "mystical death" of the soul makes God the sole and exclusive master of all human acts and thus absolves the individual from all personal responsibility.

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Stolpe summarizes the spiritual evolution of Christina as follows: in the *first* stage she adheres to a Stoic ideal of heroic virtue combined with faith in God and a simultaneous aversion to some of the central Christian dogmas. In the *second* stage she espouses a sort of Catholic "modernism," owing to her strong desire to reconcile the articles of faith with the findings of natural science. In the *third* and final stage she clings to a quietistic form of mysticism "which relinquishes her former humanistic faith and sees in divine grace the one and only means of salvation."

In 1680 Christina had her secretary rearrange her "Maxims" in two volumes, the first of which was titled *Ouvrage de Loisir*, the second *Les Sentiments [Héroïques]*. Christina herself went to work to revise the original manuscript of volume II, trying to substitute in many instances her newly acquired mystical faith for her formerly held Stoically tinged humanism. The facsimiles reproduced in Stolpe's edition show clearly Christina's energetic handiwork in this attempted revision. While thus the *Sentiments Héroïques* in their present form reflect a moderately orthodox form of Catholic mysticism, those maxims which show the influence of the more extreme teachings of Molinos are relegated largely to the *Ouvrage de Loisir*.

It is perhaps *Maxim 496* which contains the truest expression of the seasoned faith and ripened wisdom which this remarkable woman had achieved in the final years of her fruitful life: "Our true glory and happiness depend on the last moment of our life; all the rest passes away like smoke which . . . is carried away by the wind; and it is in this last terrible or happy moment that God makes known to us what we are and what we shall be for all eternity, in the view of the entire universe and of God Himself."

Sven Stolpe concludes his scholarly, bilingual (Swedish-French) and beautifully printed edition of Queen Christina's "Maxims" with these words: "We must place Christina within the context of her time; we must study her, keeping in mind the entire spiritual history of her epoch; and we must analyze [her life and work] from every point of view: the history of medicine, of physiology, of feminine psychology, the history of ideas and the history of literature. Once this has been accomplished—but not before—these documents come to life and assume meaning."

Stanford University

Kurt F. Reinhardt

Brief Venture

A Study In Yellow. Katherine Mix. University of Kansas. 1960. \$5.00.

THIS BOOK is a mosaic of the intricate '90's and supplies adequate evidence to contradict the superficial labeling of the aesthetic-naturalistic decade as merely "gay" or "decadent." Catholic readers of *A Study in Yellow* notice, within the complex historical survey of the book, a belated, minor movement, for so many were the converts to Catholicism that there was added further weight to the contradiction that the '90's were individualized only by agnostic "art-for-art-sakism." In an epoch vivified by scandals, nihilism, and addictions to absinthe and opium, such Catholics as the Meynells, Chesterton, Baring, Francis Thompson, Lionel Johnson, Katherine Tyman Hickson—to cite a few—emphasized their religious convictions.

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Of the many writers and artists who contributed to *The Yellow Book*, there are miniature sketches of Le Gallienne, Symons, Watson, Crackanthorpe, Davidson, Moore, Gosse, Dowson, Mrs. Craigie, Ella D'Arcy, Garnett, Saintsbury, H. James, Corvo, Dobson, and M. Beerbohm—a list symbolic of the considerable range of temperaments, talents, and “ism’s” which gave the periodical its unique personality. Significantly absent among the contributors to the sensational quarterly (which ran from April 1894 to May 1897) was the name of Oscar Wilde. Non-contributors like Edith Wharton, Kipling, E. A. Robinson, and Thomas Hardy were interested bystanders. Hence, emphasis in *A Study in Yellow* falls justly on the rise, popularity, and disappearance of that new venture in publishing, *The Yellow Book*, launched by Elkin Matthews and John Lane of *The Bodley Head*. With Henry Harland as editor and Aubrey Peardsley as art-editor, *The Yellow Book* achieved a dual victory: the uprooting of stale, Victorian formulas in writing and allied arts, and a seed-time for Twentieth Century experiments in thought-forms. Because of its iconoclasm, *The Yellow Book* met—but survived—an inhospitable press: *Punch* parodied its numbers; *The Westminster Gazette* recommended, “An act of Parliament ought to make this sort of thing illegal.” The author of *A Study in Yellow* (better known as Katherine Lyon in *The New Yorker* and other magazines) enhances her study with some thirteen photographs and offers bibliographical references copious enough to satisfy a scholar.

Mary A. Reilly

The Augustinian Expression

Sources and Resources: The Literary Traditions of Christian Humanism. By Barry Ulanov. The Newman Press. \$4.50.

THE TERM *Christian Humanism* is frequently a puzzling and difficult one in a world like ours where things arrange themselves, with a kind of automatic Manichaeism, in terms of contraries. Christianity seeks to exalt the spirit rather than the flesh, the intelligible rather than the tangible, the divine rather than the profane; humanism, as we usually think of it, emphasizes the human, the tangible, the values of life in an earthly environment. How, then, can there be such a thing as Christian humanism? When we speak of it, do we not involve ourselves in a paradox, or at least in a delicately balanced ambiguity? The answer to this question, perhaps, lies in the fact that our “contraries” represent an over-simplification; for Christianity has its own conception of the human and of human potentiality, consistent with the teachings of the Gospels and the philosophy of the Fathers. This book seeks to suggest the nature of some of the literary manifestations of this humanism, not to explore them thoroughly, but to put them before the reader in such a way as to encourage his own imaginative and intellectual exploration of the problems involved.

Specifically, Ulanov is concerned with the tradition of Augustinian literary expression, with the rhetoric of allegory. The Christian humanist as he is here envisaged is not a man who shuts his eyes to the material world around him; nor does he cling to it avidly for its own sake. Rather, he finds in it an expression, however “dark,” of the truths of the spirit; and the search for these truths is the object of his whole attention. Since what he discerns is something enigmatically expressed, his own expression is also frequently enigmatic so that

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those readers who are attentive may share with him the pleasure of discovery. The devices of literary enigma as they are here described are manifold and varied, changing with the course of time and with the personalities involved. We are introduced briefly to St. Augustine, Boethius, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, Dante, Shakespeare, Pascal, Sterne, Fielding, Newman, and Dostoevski. These representative figures are treated chronologically within a framework of chapters on the Patristic Assimilation, the Renaissance Assimilation, and the Modern Assimilation.

The book as a whole is rich in perceptions, some of which are not only new but worthy of special attention. The chapter on the Patristic Assimilation, for example, makes the point that the Age of the Fathers did not achieve a simple "synthesis" of pagan tradition and Christian philosophy; the process was more selective, so that, for the Christians, "assimilation did not consist of being assimilated." The treatment of St. Augustine rightly emphasizes the Scriptural basis for his thought and includes simple and clear accounts of the doctrine of signs, of the Augustinian conception of order and beauty, and of the doctrine of illumination. Among the most luminous pages of the book are those devoted to Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, which is here seen for what it is, and for what it has seldom been understood to be since the last great medieval commentary on it written by Nicholas Trivet in the fourteenth century: a literary allegory. The chapter on St. Gregory exhibits a justifiable enthusiasm for his work, unfortunately rare in modern discussions of the subject. The chapter on St. Thomas is a plea for a recognition of the fact that in addition to being a scholastic philosopher Thomas was a writer of some literary stature. But the specific merits of this thoughtful book are perhaps best left for the reader to discover for himself. He may not agree with all of the points made, and the attitudes ingrained in him by humanistic doctrines of another type may sometimes engender a sense of outrage in his mind together with a demand for systematic "proof" of a kind this book does not pretend to offer. But if he reads with some of the generosity of spirit exhibited by the author himself, he will not fail to agree with one of the principal contentions made: "There are few greater rewards for literacy than the library of Christian humanism and few more easily accessible, but how few have claimed it!" If a few more may be led to claim it, even tentatively, this book will have served its purpose.

Princeton University

D. W. Robertson, Jr.

Black or White Magic?

The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art. By Robert C. Elliott. Princeton University Press, 1960.

AS THE TITLE indicates, this book attempts to go to the roots of satire in primitive attitudes and behavior patterns. Its first paragraph sets forth the thesis of the whole:

This book deals with what John Dryden called the underwood of satire and the timber trees: that is, with the origins of satire in primitive magic and incantation and also with some of satire's towering achievements. My aim is both theoretical and historical: to elucidate an early

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connection of satire with magical power and to show that original connection survives, in an underground and distorted way, in satire written today.

It is not a history of literary satire, and it does not deal with all facets of the art. It does make good the promise of its title.

Archilochus, a Greek satirist of the seventh century B.C., was, according to tradition, the first satirist to whose verses were ascribed lethal powers. The origin of this notion of the deadly power of satire is rooted in magical curses. "The word could kill; and in popular belief it *did* kill." Elliott has done original work in tracing the relations of satire and magic, especially in early Irish and Arabic culture, where stories of satirists killing people with their verses abound. He later shows that this notion of satire's lethal efficacy endures even to our own day, notably in the writings of Wyndham Lewis and Roy Campbell.

After the first two chapters, on satire and magic, history and theory, which occupy more than a third of the whole book, the author devotes a chapter to Roman Verse Satire. The Romans claimed the genre as their own contribution to poetry: "*Satura tota nostra est*," said Quintilian. It is a curiosity of etymology that the English word *satire* is derived from the Latin *satura* (originally: mixture, medley), while the verb *satirize* and the adjective *satirical* come from the Greek word for satyr. The Romans stressed the moral and social functions of satire, but "sophisticated as Roman satire is, it still retained a connection, enigmatic though it be, with its primitive past."

"The Satirist Satirized: Studies of the Great Misanthropes" is the most significant chapter in the book from the standpoint of substantive literary criticism. After discussing the railer in earlier literature—Thersites, Loki, Bricriu, Unferth—Elliott considers very thoroughly three masterpieces: Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, Molière's *Le Misanthrope*, and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Elliott finds Timon a satirist-curser in the tradition of the Irish Aithirne, who is himself satirized by Shakespeare for his excess of cynicism. Alceste, in the French play, "demands the most acute moral discrimination of his friends, yet lacks the quality he requires in others." Gulliver, in Swift's satire, is similarly himself both satirist and satirized. Elliott follows Northrop Frye in his view of *Gulliver's Travels* as Menippean satire.

The author comes to the contemporary scene in "Twentieth Century Magic," the chapter in which he takes up Wyndham Lewis and Roy Campbell specifically, and substantiates most brilliantly his thesis that the primitive notion of satire as a lethal weapon still lives in our own day. Thus Lewis's *BLAST* is "a magically charged prose worthy of the archaic prophet," and *Men Without Art* and *Apes of God* equate satire both with art and with truth. "True satire must be vicious," asserts Zagreus in the latter work. If Lewis gives us the theory of satire, Roy Campbell gives us the practice. Roy Campbell, in Elliott's opinion, "wrote some beautiful lyrics, some expert translations of St. John of the Cross and Baudelaire, and some of the most accomplished English verse satire of our time." But against this must be set his anti-semitism, his anti-intellectualism, and his many hatreds. "Many of the opinions of Campbell must be loathsome to any civilized mind . . . The opinions are stupid and evil and insofar as they inform the poetry, the poetry must suffer thereby." Campbell is obsessively concerned with the magic power of language, and he literally be-

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lives in his own magic (cf. *Flowering Rifle*). "The poet is no longer a maker of art; he is the instrumentality of his own rage." The final summing up is devastating: "Campbell worked from a rotten center. As a poet he rejected the austere demands of art by retreating into the impossibilities of magic. Against the chaos of a disintegrating society he could oppose only the madness of totalitarian violence. . . . Campbell is the disease he pretends to cure." The indictment is very carefully documented, and it is severe.

In "The Satirist and Society," after surveying the subject, Elliott comes to the conclusion that the satirist never actually brings about reform, that he may even discredit institutions—"the tainted part becoming through the strange efficacies of art the whole" and that though the satirist's practice is often sanative, "it may be revolutionary in ways that society cannot possibly approve, and in ways that may not be clear even to the satirist."

The conclusion, entitled "The Life of Satire," puts the question whether the genesis of satire in magic has any significance for satire today, quite directly. The answer is equally direct: "There can be little doubt that below the level of consciousness primitive magic lives on powerfully in us all." "In obscure ways we 'know' that satire kills."

This is a rather chilling view, and though the author does not labor the inference, the reader of his book must conclude that satire is a dangerous art. Is it a vicious one as well? The Christian must often have asked himself, while reading satire or perhaps practicing it himself, whether the commandment of charity is not violated by it. If we should love our neighbor as ourselves, should not satire begin at home? Should it stay there? The reading of this book troubles the conscience as much as it informs the literary consciousness.

Victor M. Hamm

Multum in Parvo

Language, Truth and Poetry. By Victor M. Hamm. Marquette University Press. \$2.50.

THIS, the Aquinas Lecture for 1960, is the most recent in the distinguished series of slender volumes devoted to theology and philosophy, science and humane letters. For those unable to be there, it is always a pleasure to read the annual offering of the Aristotelian Society of Marquette University.

In the present work Hamm surveys three traditions backing three contemporary explanations of language, truth and poetry. These current positions are logical positivism, mythologism, and realism or, to use an Aristotelian schema, defective, excessive, and moderate attitudes about the truth-function of language and poetry. The positivist (Hamm takes the cue for his own title from A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*) dismisses poetry as non-informative, mere pseudo-statement, because it is neither logical nor empirically verifiable. The mythologist, on the contrary, holds with the English and German Romantics, the *Symbolistes*, the Surrealists and Yeats that "words alone are certain good" in the belief that language creates its own reality. In contrast to either denigration or divinization is the view of such humanists as Gilson and Maritain in the tradition of Aristotle and the realists, who consider poetry "not

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indeed as logic or as esoteric revelation, but as a human activity of ancient origin and perduring value."

Readers will enjoy Hamm's skillful compounding of poets, philosophers and critics, from antiquity to the present; they will profit from his extensive buttressing of the lecture with helpful footnotes for additional study. This is indeed *multum in parvo*.

St. Louis University

Louis F. May

The Religious Greene

The Labyrinthine Ways of Graham Greene. By Francis Kunkel. Sheed and Ward. \$3.50.

THE *Labyrinthine Ways of Graham Greene* is an impressive survey of Greene's work, considering as it does the entertainments, the early novels, those later novels which are termed "Catholic," the drama, and that portion of Greene scholarship which is both useful and challenging. Kunkel considers recurrent themes, characters, situations, and symbols, and he evaluates influences, both literary and religious, on Greene as a maturing artist. Those passages that describe the influences of James and Conrad, Dickens and Dostoevsky, Bernanos and Mauriac are particularly good, for Kunkel is neither dogmatic nor preciously ingenious in pointing out parallels. Simply and correctly he indicates that Greene's reading took him to many writers—the influences are to be noted and appreciated by the specialist.

Perhaps the most provocative section of *The Labyrinthine Ways of Graham Greene* is that which deals with the "Catholic" novels. Kunkel's view is that Greene in dramatizing theological problems presents, of necessity, a religious view of life, a proposition that seems to direct his literary judgments and to prejudice at times his interpretations. He says: "Although these novels are explicitly Catholic, they are in no sense narrow, cozy, complacent, or moralistic. They are Catholic without being aggressively sectarian, highly denomination-alized, or piously evangelical." What Greene is involved in, he says, is the drama of the human soul "engaged in its adventure with eternity." From this point Kunkel goes on to discuss the "Catholic" novels not so much as works of art but as works that reflect, in one way or another, Roman Catholic orthodoxy. The whiskey priest is to Kunkel less a story about a whiskey priest than a "dramatic enactment of the utilization of an imperfect agent by God"; and Scobie becomes a neurotic who mixes self-pity and pity for others with religion to make a combination noble to himself. *The Power and the Glory* is judged Greene's best effort and *The Heart of the Matter* a failure. Where this judgment falls short is in evaluating the essential humanity of both the whiskey priest and Scobie, and in considering the genuine affection and sympathy that

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the reader feels for both these men involved in earthly as well as theological dilemmas. By insisting that *The Heart of the Matter* would have been more successful if Greene had made greater use of Scobie's neuroticism and less use of jumbled religious theory, Kunkel fails to appreciate sufficiently the nature of the struggle that dominates the characterization. By questioning an orthodox concept of God and mercy Scobie, wrongly or rightly, pits himself against God and sets himself up, like Prometheus, as a champion of humanity. To emphasize the neurotic aspects of Scobie's character would be to minimize the spiritual struggle and to lose him to the reader.

The Labyrinthine Ways of Graham Greene is, nevertheless, an excellent commentary on the religious backgrounds of Greene's thinking. If Kunkel's interpretations are not always to one's liking, this is only further testimony of a point that he makes several times: Greene commands the interest and enthusiasms of his readers because he is, after all, a first rate writer.

Purdue University

A. A. DeVitis

Producers and Consumers

James Joyce. by Richard Ellmann. New York. Oxford University Press. \$12.50.

IT IS QUITE possible that this is the first book on Joyce since Professor Levin's that will prove seriously misleading to the young Joyce student. Levin's book was small and early. Professor Ellmann's book is large and late. Both books are based on a deep misunderstanding of Joyce with regard to "naturalism" and "symbolism." This very misunderstanding has also been the reason for their ready acceptance by the literary establishment, for it was the occasion of no small rejoicing on the part of the mandarins to hear that all that Joyce was really up to was a continuation of already familiar patterns. Levin reported that Joyce was a naturalist in the French tradition. Ellmann reports that Joyce's symbolist world is only the old quest for self-expression. In the same way Frye in criticism has permitted a reversion to older methods of literary classification while seeming to be involved in a new enterprise. (Frye in effect runs around the new criticism, back to a method allied to the old Germanic philology, avoiding exegesis of verbal effects at all costs.) Levin, by classifying Joyce as "naturalism," was saying that Joyce had merely piled the old novel documentation higher and deeper. The perspectives were larger and the pictorial spaces provided by the enlarged perspectives were filled in with meticulous industry. The fact that neither Flaubert nor Joyce use any perspective at all was lost on Levin. Flaubert like Cézanne had rediscovered the two-dimensional, pre-perspective form. The mass of "naturalistic detail" in Flaubert and Joyce is not arranged in perspective or from any "point of view." It is arranged by

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juxtapositions of themes to effect ratios among forms. The result is not light *on* but light *through*. This is what is meant by "inscape" versus landscape in Hopkins and by "epiphany" in Joyce. It is the technique of a Seurat and Rouault. The audience is not a camera eye as in movie form, but the screen as in television. It was André Girard of NBC, long associate of Rouault, who pointed out to me that it was his work with Rouault which enabled him to recognize the novel artistic power of the television medium. Because just as Rouault painted his pictures as if they were glass windows (light through), so the television image is a form of illumination from within. The television image is also a mosaic of luminous points. And like painting since Cézanne it is two-dimensional, endowing the retinal impression with tactile values.

The new dimensions of art since Cézanne are lost on Ellmann. He is a man with a point of view. Joyce eludes him. A very notable example of this inability to come to grips with Joyce occurs at the very outset of his large book: "Stephen Dedalus said the family was a net which he would fly past, but James Joyce chose rather to entangle himself and his works in it. It seemed he had flown by the net of his father's family only to catch himself in one of his own." Not to have noticed the new dimension of art, and to have understood that Joyce said that he would fly *by means of* the nets of family, nationalism and religion—this is indeed to have a point of view, one that flies right past the target. And this point of view includes a resentment toward the boobytraps of modern art and literature. For the nonviewpoint work of art involves the beholder not as consumer but as producer. "My producers," we hear in the *Wake*, "are they not my consumers?" The conventional literary man is consumer-oriented and dislikes the role of co-creator. He expects a completed package of spelt-out message. The profound differences which Ellmann experiences with the art of Joyce not only impel him to force Joyce's two-dimensional and multi-levelled composition into a three-dimensional perspective of self-expression, they inspire him to present exactly such a person as could be responsible for such an opaque and unpleasant kind of art. Boswell's *London Journals*, by comparison with this biography ("beogrefright" as the form is called in the *Wake*) presents a rational, urbane and tolerable human being. Joyce emerges here as detestable and imbecilic. Ellmann's point of view excludes that producer-orientation which enabled Joyce's friends and associates to give only due regard to his personal modes at the same time that they were aware of his productive enterprises. Ellmann does not fail to mention Joyce's activities as a writer. He has gathered new biographical materials and added them to the existing mass of reports. He tracks through Joyce's life chronologically in the literal, naturalistic tradition. That is why his book will be used by the young and by the harried theme and thesis writers. And there is one advantage the young will discover in using this work, namely that Ellmann's

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naive misconceptions are so accessible and startling that the young readers will have the pleasure of flat disagreement with a senior teacher.

It would also be misleading to conclude this notice without thanks to Ellmann for the item: "'Do you believe in the *Scienza Nuova*?' asked Kristensen. 'I don't believe in any science,' Joyce answered, 'but my imagination grows when I read Vico as it doesn't when I read Freud or Jung.'" Joyce found Freud and Jung naive and mechanical.

University of Toronto

H. M. McLuhan

The Electric Culture

The Books at the Wake. By James S. Atherton. Faber and Faber Limited. 1959.

THIS IS "a study of some literary allusions in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*."

The very nature of symbolism is the systematic withholding of information in order to get the reader into the act. Poe developed both symbolist poetry and the detective story on these lines. It is inevitable therefore that any symbolist structure will be allusive rather than declarative. The result has been that modern poetry has come to mean courses in world literature and culture. And scholarly comment on modern symbolist structures has taken the form of filling in what the author deliberately left for the reader to fill in for himself. It is a question, therefore, how valid is the task of writing and publishing what the original author assumed would be the task of each reader for himself.

That is to say, literature since Flaubert and painting since Cézanne have no point of view. The scholarship and criticism which used to provide historical or personal perspectives for art and literature are unacceptable. That is not to say that knowledge is irrelevant. But information arranged in perspective instead of in multi-levelled simultaneity is irrelevant. Sixteenth century literal exegesis of scripture was based on private perspective. The whole of scripture was assumed to be amenable to single-plane vision, and felt to be homogeneous in all its parts. A single point of view that was applied to materials regarded as homogeneous became the model for historical studies until our own century. The revolution came from the study of art forms and pre-literate societies.

Atherton notes that "Joyce had the strange idea that he could absorb or subsume other books into his own simply by quoting their titles." The extent to which Joyce did feel this way is well indicated in the title, *Finnegans Wake*, which enacts the drama of the book in a sort of microcosmic resonance. It contains all tenses of the verb and all levels of substantive meaning, private and collective.

"Amongst other things *Finnegans Wake* is a history of writing. We begin with writing on 'A bone, a pebble, a ramskin . . . leave them to cook in the mutthering pot: and Gutenmorg with his cromagon charter tinting fats and great prime must once for omniboss stepp rubrickredd out of the wordpress.'"

Here Joyce manages to produce a myth included in the title, *Finnegans Wake*. That is to say, the first time through the tribal cycle, and eventual detribalization by writing, man was somnambulist. Today the Finn cycle begins again. We

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are re-tribalizing, going oral and collective under telegraph, radio and television. The wake of civilized or detribalized man is in progress and Finn will awake at this wake. Next time round the cycle, tribal man will not be somnambulist. Post-literate man will not be like preliterate man. The collective night world of the tribe will undergo the same illumination that our social lives have done via electricity. Likewise the electric movement of information abolishes the walls and boundaries between subject matters as much as between night and day and nationalities. The tribalism will consist of one tribe in one global village—to wit, the human family.

To some, this may appear as a Utopian picture or dream of the future. But it entails great suffering even now. Most of our acquired culture and established institutions will, automatically, be brainwashed from our private and collective lives during the process of the electric welding of society, much as medieval institutions were affected by the coming of the assembly-lines of Gutenberg movable types.

In the *Wake* Joyce assimilates the whole of our new electric culture to traditional book culture in a great paradigm verbivoco visual culture.

University of Toronto

H. M. McLuhan

The Debate Once More

Chaque homme dans sa nuit. By Julian Green. Paris: Plon. 11,70 NF.

AN AMERICAN writer of Protestant upbringing (Presbyterian and Episcopal) and Roman Catholic convictions, Green has here another novel about the debate of flesh vs. spirit. He once said he was not a Catholic novelist. Nor is he yet. Unlike Graham Greene or François Mauriac, to both of whom he is often compared, Green tests rather than affirms the Catholic conclusion. *Chaque homme dans sa nuit*, which may well prove to be his *chef-d'oeuvre*, uses Manichean symbolism to concretize Jansenist (or Calvinist) doctrine: depravity of man, unconditional election, and perseverance of saints.

In this novel a masochistic lecher and devout primitive Christian play out the allegory with a mediocre haberdasher, Wilfred Ingram, throughout the Eastertide of his twenty-fourth year. His murder and death occur during Whitsuntide. Wilfred is common, not humble. He is even arrogant when questioned about his Catholicism. Unlike his predecessor Joseph Day, who thought his flesh a hindrance to his salvation, Wilfred finds his spirit an obstacle to his lust. Living in an American city, he chafes under the restrictions imposed by his faith, although he never doubts his election.

In terms of common-sense experience Wilfred's temporal effect upon most other characters is nefarious. Requested to pray for his dying Uncle Horace, also a Catholic, he first stupefies himself with the contents of his hip flask. He so stirs his cousin Angus' homosexuality that the latter becomes a prey to blackmailers. He awakens the sensuality of his innocent cousin Phoebe Knight, and her husband James, a fanatical Calvinist, is challenged by the latent adultery to play God. He drives his friend Freddie to suicide by frightening him about syphilis; he goads another friend Tommy into a life of dissipation. His boss Schoenhals, son of a rabbi, confesses an unnatural attachment for him. Finally,

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he leads the renegade Catholic Max to murder him, the shock of the murder destroying Max's sanity.

Are we to assume that Wilfred is a divine agent, providing each character a Purgatory? Horace and James do have their faith revitalized. Angus, a superior man, is humbled. Freddie asks Wilfred to baptise him. Tommy's open sobbing at the funeral may indicate repentance. His death puts Phoebé into a state of shock. And Max, incoherent, will not accept life.

Nor can Wilfred's soul and body be brought to accept each other in this life. However, from the radiance of Wilfred's death, witnessed by both James and the priest in attendance, it is clear that he has broken through the night of the flesh. But after night what?

Green's implications are ambivalent, but his implementation has never been firmer. *Chaque homme dans sa nuit* is his most complex and explicit novel. Limiting the known to Wilfred's experience until the coma preceding death, he successfully subordinates eight other major characters. He narrates in third-person protagonist-subject. Rarely does he shift to protagonist-object. Only once does he intrude an omniscient comment. His cumulative succession of theatrically lit scenes reaches the reader's inner eye intact.

He is an artist (a calling Sartre facetiously denied both Mauriac and God). And every novelist must play God. But is Green taking the Jansenist side of the debate? Here the flesh makes life a night of horror. The spirit must wait until death. This rejection of the body implies a criticism of God's plan. Wilfred realizes no joy in the human condition. His actions and their outcome could either discredit or verify Jansenist doctrine. With the honesty for which he is respected, Green has thrown intermittent candle flickers upon the debate.

Stephens College

Marilyn Gaddis Rose

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